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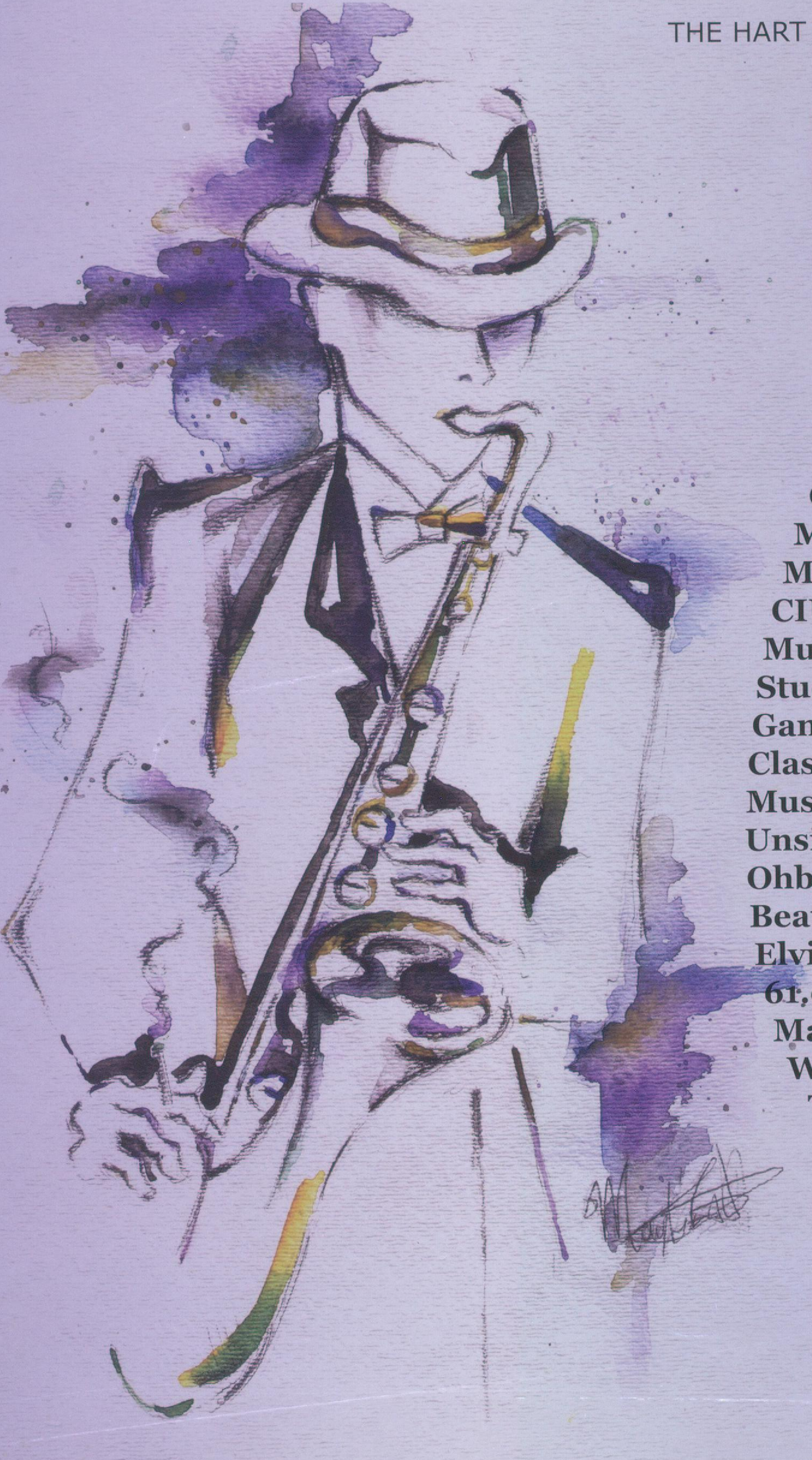
Demo.

THE HART HOUSE MUSIC MAGAZINE

February 2010 / Issue 6



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The Wind Symphony
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HART HOUSE
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Dearest Reader,

My favourite thing about music is that virtually everyone likes it. Have you ever met someone who doesn't? Because there are innumerous ways to appreciate it; music is a cultural commonality linking humanity and every society that has existed since the beginning of time. Music's multiple facets and dynamic nature are responsible for its significance. No matter who you are, where (or when) you live(d), music is—in some way, shape or form—a part of your life. This is precisely what makes music so special.

Nevertheless, while music is appreciated by all, it is not necessarily appreciated in the same manner. Although it may connote different things for different people, at the end of the day, we all agree that ultimately, music is a source of indescribable satisfaction. Thus, this issue highlights music's diverse contexts and celebrates the unique and varied ways in which people appreciate music. Whether it's from the perspective of the listener, performer, historian, composer, video-gamer or web-surfer, DEMO has something for you.

As always, we start by filling you in on what's new around Hart House. If you have ever sat at a concert and imagined what the band's rehearsals were like, or wondered what someone passing you on the street is listening to on their iPod, we've got the answers, check out *Music on Campus*. You'll find an academic take on music in our newest *Music Ed* section, where you can improve your composition skills or brush up on those music history facts.

In *Features* we profile four U of T bands, pay tribute to Michael Jackson and give you a history of recorded music. Our *Opinion* writers tackle everything from classical music to rap. And finally, in the *Review* section we bring you a record store, opera, website, television and videogame review; in addition to the usual concert reviews of shows here at Hart House as well as off campus.

In closing, I will quote the founders of DEMO and ask, "What are you listening to?" Enjoy the issue!

Mary Scourboutakos
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Assistant
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Have a comment about the issue?
Demo welcomes letters from its readers.
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Music News:
On and Off Campus
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Hart House at a Glance:

Zoe
Dille

Welcome to Hart House, a House with Heart! Most of you will have noticed the large pink neon heart suspended high above the front entrance way of Hart House. This new addition has been attracting a lot of positive attention and lighting up the night sky since September's orientation festivities. Launched as part of Hart House's annual Wide Open House, the pink heart is a beacon and a warm "hello" beckoning students to come inside. The heart is a reminder to students that Hart House is a place that is here to serve their interests: with compassion, empathy and attention to body, mind and spirit. Hart House has always been about learning outside the classroom—a school of life that is crammed with experiences, trials, errors, friendships, arts, culture, food and wellness. So far, this school year has proven that we are staying true to these principles with events centering on Aboriginal issues, a Conscious Activism Documentary Festival unpacking the intersection of spiritualism and activism; as well as lots of musical offerings, dialogues and debates, play readings, world class art exhibits and wide ranging athletic classes.

The Music Committee had a particularly busy semester and has contributed significantly to the plethora of experiences at the House. Our Thursday night *Stages* series has come out a clear winner; with its focus on urban and popular music, the committee have presented folk reggae artist *Dylan Murray* and ethereal house music group *Ohbijou* to packed and enthusiastic houses. Funk rock hipsters Run with The Kittens have stepped in as our monthly House band and have brought their own unique brand of high energy music and fun to the Arbor Room. In other corners of the House music has played a huge role, whether tickling the ivories at a recital in the *Midday Mosaic* series, or just jazzing out on Friday nights at the *Jazz at Oscars* series, music has reined supreme. The official launch of CIUT at Hart House is a fitting compliment to the Music Committee and we are looking forward to working collaboratively on some exciting projects in the future with them. CIUT has a new studio on the main floor as well as office space and a recording studio on the third floor— if you haven't been in the Map Room lately step inside and have a look or a listen to a CIUT live broadcast you might even catch a celebrity or two, like funny man Rick Mercer who stopped by in November for a chat and a few laughs. The Reading Room on the main floor has also become a beehive of student activity – its purple walls have been a hit with study weary students; while the computers, bright coloured couches and comfy chairs provide a brief escape from the institutional look of the classroom.

This year the music committee is diverse and eclectic ranging from first year students to seasoned 4th year members, each bringing their own musical tastes, interests and strengths to the committee table. With the guidance of a programme coordinator and all the services and support of Hart House staff the committee is dreaming big and aiming high. It's been an exciting first semester and looking into the year ahead, the music committee and Hart House at large will continue to: *Go with heart and Do with soul.*

Photograph by Day Milman

Times Have Changed for CIUT

Rose
Palmieri

Although the white decrepit Victorian-esque house on St. George Street had charm and novelty as CIUT's headquarters since its humble beginnings, it's time to move on. In the words of Bob Dylan, "Times they-are-a-changing," and with the desire to expand the Rotman School of Commerce there was no time like the present to change things up for CIUT and re-build them a new home. Fortunately, they snagged themselves the best location in all of UofT.

Hart House, UofT's student center, truly is the heart of this seemingly intimidating and enormous campus. Upon reaching Hart House, the intimidation and fear dissipates, as you climb the front steps and are welcomed by a glowing florescent pink heart attached to the exterior of this beautiful, medieval looking building. Entering the building is heart warming indeed, as there is no way you can miss the smiles on friendly faces, the social gatherings in every corner, and the latest addition of musical sounds in the background, thanks to CIUT.

Previously, the radio station felt somewhat disconnected from students. Because of its isolated location, it could only be noticed from afar, while one is on their way to the fourteenth floor of Robarts. With their change in location, CIUT has been brought to the students, who can now study or chill out in the Map room, while watching performances by musicians or listening to various programming.

CIUT's new home is certainly an upgrade from their old location. The new station comprises of three professional studio spaces, located on the first and third floors of Hart House. And for those who are aware of the magical collection of vinyl at CIUT, rest assured that they still have room to store those precious records.

Finally, as a result of their move, CIUT is now broadcasting from the "heart" of U of T, at the center of student life. Thus, the new location has sparked renewed interest in the station and will hopefully attract new listeners. While Hart House may be a high traffic and bustling building, be sure to take notice of the positive change brought about by the addition of CIUT.

CIUT 89.5FM
oadcasting Live
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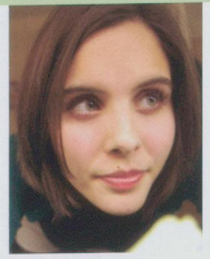
89.5FM
www.ciut.fm
iversity of Toronto Community Radio

The CIUT studio on Hart House's main floor.

Photograph by Rachel Chepesiuk

Hart House

Soundcheck:
A U of T Playlist



Anna Vilner

Patiently sitting on a lone bench outside of Sidney Smith Hall, I observed the frantic students slipping past one another to get to class on time. It struck me that what I was about to do may be just a tiny bit strange. I called a friend of mine for words of encouragement. "I'm not giving any!" she said laughingly. "You haven't even attempted yet." So I put my headphones on and played a nonsensical song by Crystal Castles to calm me down a bit, before I made my first attack; his name was Diego, a 2nd year student walking towards Robarts.

"Hi, I'm writing an article for Demo, the Hart House music magazine. I was wondering if I could ask you what you're listening to right now?"
"Uhhh." He gave me a quizzical look and took out his earbuds. "What was the question?"
"Which song are you listening to?"
"Buddha Bar" he replied, before he hurried to catch the crosswalk. I managed to catch up and ask for his name, but I guess I didn't notice that he had given me the title of a compilation, and not a song for my potential U of T playlist. Oh well, it was a decent start. This is manageable, I told myself, as I began my trek across campus.

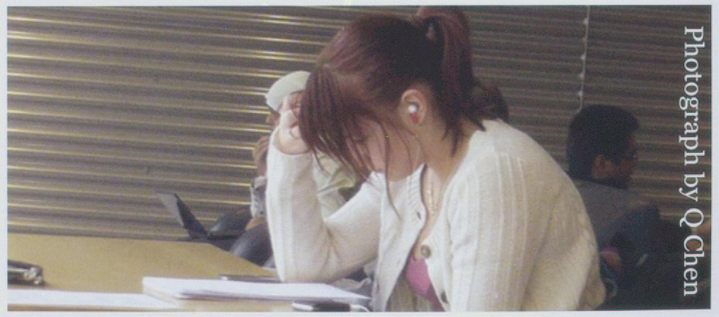
I ended up approaching around twenty or so people on my way towards Vic and St. Mike's.

Some of the more notable responses were:
-From a girl with a light pink jacket and a face full of make-up, "Actually, I'm talking on the phone. But if I were to listen to something, it'd probably be, like, Beyonce or something."
-From a guy with a stern expression and black-rimmed glasses, "I'm listening to a lecture."
"But if you were to, say, listen to music, what would you listen to?"
"Nothing. I listen to lectures."

Then there was the shy girl who I may or may not have scared off with my introduction. She promptly power-walked away and murmured something about being late for class. I began to wonder what I would have done in her situation, maybe the same thing? It truly depends on what I would have been listening to at the time. Would I have lied if it had been something embarrassing, like Akon's most recent album *Freedom*? I know I'd be up for any questions about Phoenix or Cat Power or Yeah Yeah Yeahs—any of the artists I generally find myself drawn towards, and to whose music and lyrics I feel connected to.

The morning enlightened me in a number of ways. I was reminded of the Toronto-based experimental band called Holy Fuck, by a student named Kimberly; while Jesse introduced me to the newest Lady Gaga single. Then there was Andy, who gave me a listen to Maps and Atlases' "You and Me and the Mountain", right there in Queen's Park. I have to admit that I've been hooked ever since, and for that, I thank you Andy.

As I walked away from each person I approached that morning, I began to realize how private music can be. Maybe it was the stutter in my voice or their hesitation as they glanced down at their iPods, but the question that I was initially eager to pose, "so, what're you listening to?" somehow began to fall under the same category as—"what colour are your panties right now?" I admit that I shuddered at the sheer awkwardness of some of my rejections. But in return, I was perpetually comforted by the responses listed below. These were the people that actually consented, giving me a glimpse of themselves at that exact moment.



Photograph by Q Chen

U of T's Playlist:

1. Buddha Bar (compilation world music)/ Diego, 2nd year
2. Trainspotting Soundtrack (1996)/ Conner, 4th year
3. "This Heart is a Stone" by Acid House Kings, Sing Along With Acid House Kings (2006) /Sarah, 3rd year
4. "Walking on Sunshine" by Katrina & The Waves, Walking on Sunshine (1983)/Christina, 1st year
5. Crystal Kay/ Julia, 4th year
6. "Song For You" by Alexi Murdoch, Time Without Consequence(2006)/ Anne-lise, 1st year
7. "Shake it Off" by Mariah Carey, The Emancipation of Mimi(2005)/ Rebecca, 1st Year
8. "Animal" by Karen O and the Kids, Where the Wild Things Are(2009)/ Emily, 3rd Year
9. "You and Me and the Mountain" by Maps and Atlases, You and Me and the Mountain(2008)/ Andy, 2nd Year
10. "Souls on Ten" by The Almost, Monster Monster(2009)/ John, 3rd Year
11. "Bad Romance" by Lady Gaga, Single (2009)/ Jesse, 3rd Year
12. "Casio Bossa Nova" by Holy Fuck, Holy Fuck(2005)/ Kimberly, 2nd Year

Sing, Sing, Sing! - Choirs at U of T

Ming Lau

Studying at the University of Toronto can be a bittersweet experience. Students may become bitterly frustrated with stressful deadlines and midnight cramming, but hanging out with friends and singing your hearts out together can be a sweet experience.

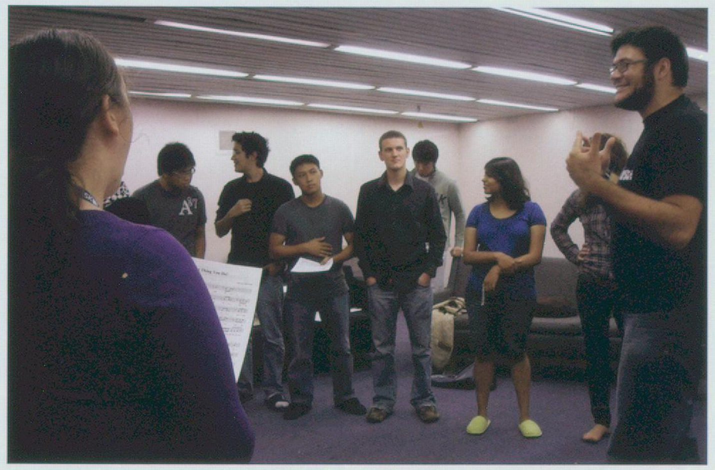
There are about seven extracurricular singing groups within the University of Toronto, each having unique musical preferences and distinct repertoires. To gain a little insight, I was fortunate enough to visit some of the choirs' rehearsals and talk to their members.

Photograph by Ming Lau

Above: The Hart House Singers. Top right: The New College Resonance. Bottom right: The U of T Gospel Choir

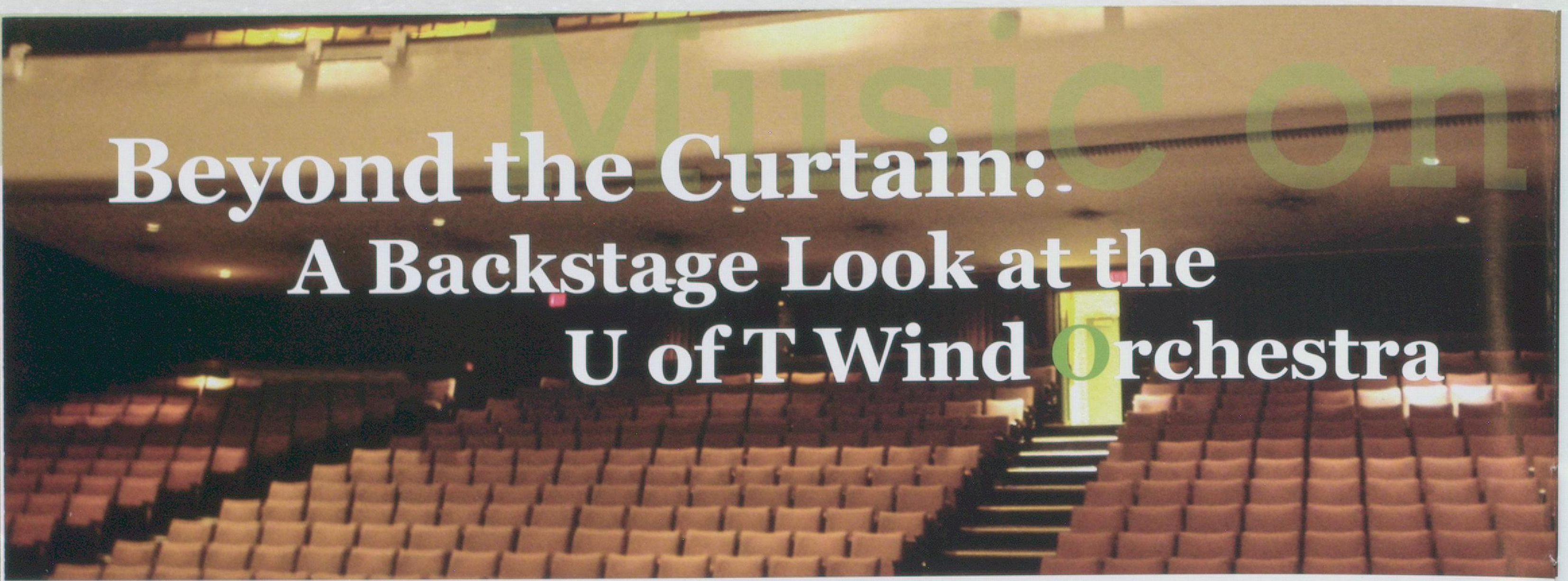
The Hart House Singers are one of the well-known unauditioned singing groups on campus. It's great for shy beginners, casual participants and experienced vocalists who enjoy tackling bigger pieces within a large group. To this day, they continue to uphold Professor Narcisse-Mair's (a former conductor) vision "to provide the opportunity for people of the university community to sing in a less formal atmosphere." They have members who have been singers for over a decade, in addition to beginners who are developing their newfound love of music, as well as friendships within the choir. "It gives you the necessary human contact," says Clare (a chemistry and math undergrad), who is a new member.

The New College Resonance is a fresh, college-based, unauditioned, a cappella choir that exclusively invites New College students to sing with them every Tuesday night. During the food tasting event, *Home is Where the Fork Is*, their enthusiasm blew the audience away. They are a fun-loving group matched with a talented, energetic conductor, who encourages and indulges in each member's love for singing. Cue, a returning member said, "I get a lot of stress; well...who doesn't in university. But after I sing, it's like a stress release for me."



The University of Toronto Gospel Choir is the best known auditioned Gospel choir in the U of T community. Their highly professional website consists of background information as well as scholarship details, album samples and an online booking form. At the first rehearsal I observed, I was completely blown away after seeing the members and hearing the music they were singing. It made me want to be a part of their choir. "It was just so amazing," remembers Hannah Park, who fell in love with the group in 2000. She also recalled the international performing opportunities they've had in Japan, Germany, Sweden and the United States.

The Varsity Jews is an auditioned a cappella choir with a distinct hint of cultural flavor. They perform a wide range of repertoire from classic rock to Hebrew folk. The Varsity Jews members are mainly Jewish; but like any other choir on campus, they welcome anyone who loves to sing. Each semester they organize singing retreats for their members. Rachel, the choir manager said, "It is a fun group of people, which makes it most fun to manage. The group has really grown and everyone who joined is really dedicated." The choir plans to release its first album this coming winter, so stay tuned.



Beyond the Curtain:

A Backstage Look at the U of T Wind Orchestra

As cliché as it sounds, the relationship between an ensemble's conductor and musicians is indeed a team-based one. Musicians rely on the conductor for musical direction and interpretation of a composer's work. And the conductor needs musicians to transform his or her visualization of the work into a real auditory experience. Amidst this dual relationship is yet another member...time, which creates a new dimension of deadlines and goals. As a concert-goer, I am subject to viewing this musical relationship from an outsiders' perspective, without getting a full sense of what it feels like. I was curious to know what it took to achieve the end result of concert day. So I decided to sit in on a few rehearsals of the University of Toronto Wind Symphony, as they prepared for their upcoming concert on November 27, 2009.

The Wind Symphony, led by conductor Dr. Jeffrey Reynolds, rehearses every Tuesday and Thursday from 3-6PM. Most of the instrumentalists (out of the sixty or so Wind Symphony members) are music majors, and have already had prior ensemble experience.

Thursday, November 5th, 2009:
(Edward Johnson Building)

3:15PM -
I enter a beige practice room in the basement, and I am greeted by conductor, Dr. Jeffrey Reynolds. In addition to conducting the Wind Symphony, he is also the performance division coordinator and senior lecturer at the Faculty of Music. After being introduced to the musicians, I eagerly take my seat near Dr. Reynolds' conductor platform. Reeds are aligned, mouthpieces are assembled, and the ensemble is ready to play.

Dr. Reynolds begins with a Bach chorale warm-up. Chorales (originally hymns sung during church services) are a wonderful way for the musicians to loosen up and sight-read at a steady pace, while focusing on tuning and clear intonation. He motions for the brass section to create a full sound, instead of a loud one. He even lets the ensemble sing out their parts to achieve the desired sound.

3:40PM -
The ensemble practices Howard Cable's "Quebec Folk Fantasy". The first clarinets begin to struggle with their high passages. For challenging rhythmic sections, the whole ensemble claps out their syncopated parts.

4:15PM -
During the 10-minute break, I get the opportunity to ask Dr. Reynolds a few questions:

V: It's great that you are so detailed with respect to tuning and intonation. Do you have a specific conducting style that you adhere to?

DR: I'd say it's not a gestural style particularly, except to make sure that I'm paying attention to the musical line. If I focus on the musical line and make sure that notes aren't shortened (for example), then the tuning tends to get better.

V: Based on your musical background, what led you to become a conductor?

DR: I always liked to conduct. When I was playing in high school band, I was asked to conduct. When I started here at the university about twenty years ago, I was asked to be a sabbatical replacement for somebody else. And then I gradually became one of the conductors here.

Tuesday, November 10th, 2009:
(Edward Johnson Building)

3:15 PM -
As Dr. Reynolds questions how one can make the music sound more beautiful, someone distinctly hollers back, "more air!" And so the musicians gather up their strength for another Bach chorale warm-up.

4:30 PM -
It is time to play Howard Cable's "Quebec Folk Fantasy". The music is a real challenge for the ensemble, as it contains complex key and tempo changes. The metronome and percussionists provide tempo support by tapping out the beat.

During the ten-minute break, I talk to bassoonist, Suzanne (1st year music performance major):

V: What is your favourite piece from the repertoire, and why?

S: "Ride" by Samuel Hazo, because it's exciting to play, it's lively and upbeat.

V: As a bassoonist, what's the most challenging piece for you?

S: Probably the Cable, just because it has a lot of fast parts (for bassoon) and it is very technical.

6:30PM -
After an intense rehearsal, I speak with Dr. Reynolds about the ensemble's progress so far:

DR: At this point in the rehearsal's cycle, I expect them to know all of their music. I think we can certainly make more progress.

V: What's the best way to maintain a connection with your musicians?

DR: I think it depends on the group and the personality of the conductor. I tend to make jokes, be relaxed, and give little anecdotes. For sure, the adversarial kind of relationship between conductor and player has no place anywhere, in my opinion, but especially not in a university space. We're trying to encourage and nurture, train and help them out.

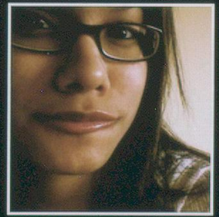
V: How do you keep up the group's energy and enthusiasm during the three hours, especially after the halfway mark?

DR: I try to do it with humor and give them a break, if I find them flagging a little bit. But I also tend to go for longer segments of the music. I'll tailor it a bit and won't stop quite so much. I know that it's a pain to stop, but everybody understands that we have to do it".

Thursday, November 26th, 2009:
(Edward Johnson Building - MacMillan Theatre)

4:15PM -
It is the second half of dress rehearsal day at the MacMillan Theatre. The stage is animated with an air of drive and anticipation, and I ask Stephanie Dunlop (a 4th year flute/piccolo player) about her thoughts for tomorrow's concert:

V: How much practice time have you devoted for the concert?



Vineeta Moraes

S: Because we have our own repertoire to play at the same time, I would say between 2-4 hours a day.

V: Which do you find harder to play - band or solo pieces?

S: Band music is easier I would say, but you have to do a lot more listening and matching with others, especially with the piccolo's tuning.

4:45PM -
Some of the instrumentalists from each section (excluding percussion) walk backstage to allow others to play in their place. Since all the band members cannot be onstage at once, they need to rotate their performing times.

Like the other pieces, the Wind Symphony attempts to play Samuel Hazo's "Ride" once through, and begin with a loud and confident brassy start. During the fast 16th-note passages, Dr. Reynolds instructs the musicians to play together and stay on the down-beat at all costs.

6:30PM -
The dress rehearsal is over and the musicians have packed up. Dr. Reynolds talks to me about his final thoughts before concert day:

V: How has the turnout been for past concerts?

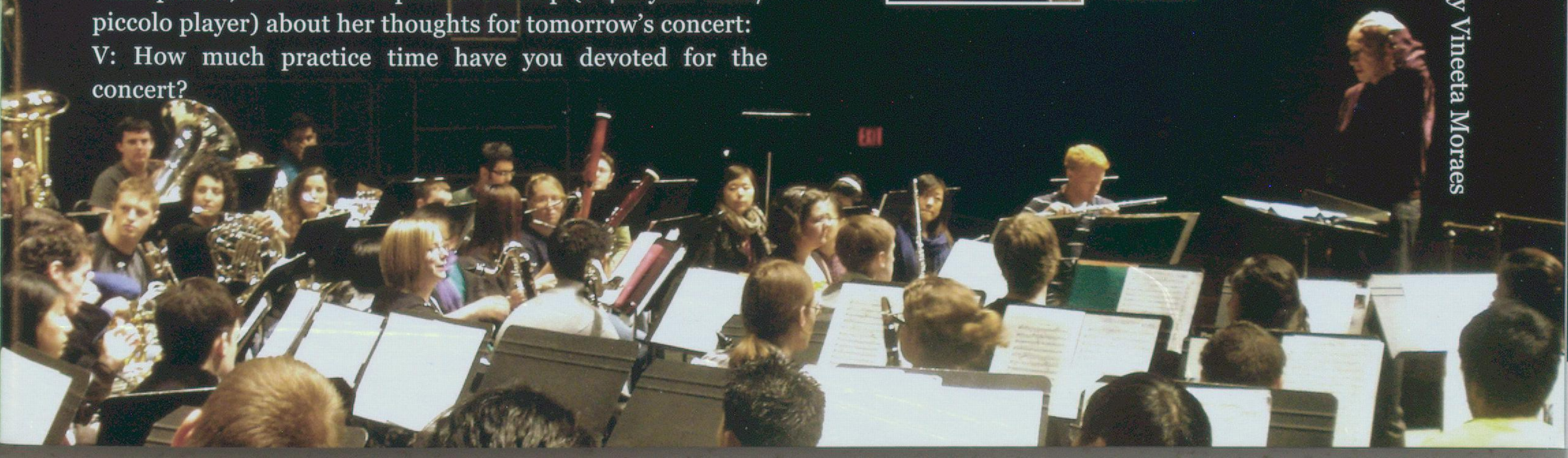
DR: We do pretty well. We get a lot of parents and friends, and there are also people who know about our concerts by reading up on events.

V: Do you wish or expect the Wind Symphony to gain more publicity, so that more UofT students could attend future concerts?

DR: A full house is always nice. We could, for instance, advertise in other parts of the university. I know that the radio station is doing a feature for our ensembles on a regular basis.

V: I know you've been conducting for a long time, but are you nervous at all?

DR: No, I'm not. I'm excited and look forward to it.



Photograph by Vineeta Moraes

How: to Compose 101

Felix Arifin

Ever had a bunch of music notes invade your mind randomly and gave you the itch to write a song? Had the problem of 'oh-geez-I-want-this-to-be-a-song-but-I-don't-know-how-to-make-it-sound-good'-itis?

Never fear, Felix is here with a couple of helpful tips to turn that melody into a beautiful song. It doesn't matter if you plan on writing a 50-page sonata, or a 3-minute pop tune, I'll give you some important tips to get you started!

1. Find your tune

Every song needs a way to be differentiated from the huge pile of music that's constantly bombarding our ears. And no, having an unchanging drum pattern with a gazillion synths ain't going to cut it either. There's a reason why Beethoven's Fifth Symphony and the Star Wars theme are familiar to listeners everywhere. These songs evoke an emotion in the listener, whether it be fear or wonder. Plus, they're really easy (and fun!) to hum to. They're characteristic, catchy, and most importantly unique.

2. Figure out your structure

Having a structure to your song is integral to making sure your song won't end up being a 15 minute long mess. Is it going to have a rondo form, a five part song? Maybe a sonata form, made up with an introduction, development and recapitulation? How about the good ol' ABABCAB, a staple of the pop song structure? It really is up to you.

3. Be creative!

Nobody ever wrote a book that said, "You have to compose using these chords and nothing else!" Be creative and take chances with your music! Find your inner voice and channel it through the notes and lyrics. Screw the parallel fifths rule and/or having one chord continue for twenty bars. As long as it expresses your themes and makes sense, then it'll be amazing.

And there you are!

Three really basic tips to get you started on that great tune of yours. I understand that it's quite vague, but seriously – music has literally no boundaries. You can pretty much do anything you want with the twelve notes that all music is comprised of. Now get out there and compose!

THURSDAY AFTERNOONS CONCERTS AT THE FACULTY OF MUSIC

Every Thursday in the Faculty of Music, you will see the main hall buzz with excitement week after week for their noon hour concerts, taking place in Walter Hall. These performances feature the many talents of the Faculty, whether it be the professors or students.

Feel free to drop by for these concerts - they are free!

Music Ed.

The "Not So Boring" History of Music

Mary Scourboutakos

Many people consider music history to be boring. However, in my biased opinion music history is not boring; as a matter of fact, it can be interesting and also entertaining. The following five "music history firsts" will demonstrate the quirky and exciting side of this "not so boring" subject.

1. THE FIRST MUSIC REBEL

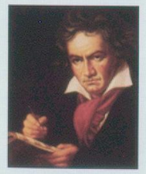
Timotheus the Greek poet and musician who lived from roughly 450-357 B.C. was the first ever music rebel; creating a precedent that would be followed for centuries to come. Timotheus played an instrument called the kithara (essentially the ancestor of the electric guitar). He was a bit of a "move and shaker" and added additional strings to his kithara. This alarmed the citizens of Athens who ordered that the additional strings be removed. Thus, demonstrating how the fear that lawlessness in music is a precursor for anarchy in society, has been apparent throughout music's history.

2. THE FIRST CONDUCTOR

Jean-Baptiste Lully (1632-1687) was the first documented conductor. While he may be the first musician to use a "baton-like-stick", the "baton" of his time was quite unlike that which we are accustomed to today; it was a heavy, six-foot-long staff/cane that he pounded on the ground in time to the music. Sadly, at a concert intended to celebrate King Louis the XIV's return to health, Lully accidentally pounded his own foot with the staff. As a result of this incident he developed gangrene and died.

3. THE FIRST MUSICAL-POLITICAL ENTANGLEMENT

Beethoven's third symphony was originally dedicated to Napolean of Bonaparte whose revolutionary ideals, Beethoven admired. However, Beethoven was so disgusted when Napolean declared himself emperor, that he violently scratched out his name, creating a hole in the dedication page and renamed it "heroic symphony, composed to celebrate the memory of a great man".



4. THE FIRST MUSIC SUPERSTAR

Niccolò Paganini (1782-1840) was, and still is considered the greatest violinist to have ever lived. His skills surpassed that of his peers to the extent that many of his contemporaries spread rumors that he made a pact and sold his soul to the devil in exchange for his supernatural abilities. Paganini supposedly had exceptionally long and flexible fingers, causing many to speculate that he had either Marfan syndrome (a genetic mutation that results in elongated fingers) or Ehlers-Danlos syndrome (also known as Rubber-Man syndrome) to account for his unique capabilities.

5. THE FIRST MUSIC CELEBRITY

Before there was Beatlemania, there was Lisztomania (a term invented by Henrich Heine to describe Franz Liszt's unprecedented popularity). Hence, Liszt (1811-1886) was the first major music celebrity. Considering his popularity, it is not unusual that fans (especially women) would fight over his discarded possessions. As a matter of fact, to accommodate the large number of requests for locks of his hair, he bought a dog and sent clippings of its fur to his admirers. In addition, Liszt invented the "masterclass" and the "recital". He was the first musician to memorize his entire repertory and perform one-man, piano-only concerts. He also revolutionized the positioning of the piano on stage, allowing the audience to view the profile of the performer; as opposed to the former tradition where the performer faced the audience.

Moonwalking Through Time:
A Michael Jackson Tribute

Shauna C. Keddy

June 25th, 2009

As I arrived by taxi to New York City's Times Square, at around five in the afternoon to see a show on Broadway, I was greeted by dozens of stunned faces. I looked around to see what everyone was staring up at in such horror, and saw the CNN building with the headline, "Michael Jackson Dead" scrolling along the perimeter. Shock rolled over my being, as I began to understand why people were pointing up at the headline, crying, and calling their friends and family to share their sorrows.

Being from the 90's generation, Michael Jackson's icon had always been a distant, yet full fledged reality in my life. Unfortunately, his tabloid reputation and the media chaos surrounding his appearance and behavior were more commonly known in my generation than the plethora of his greatest hits and top selling albums. But nonetheless, many of us can hearken back to middle school and high school dances, when "Thriller" or "Billie Jean" would begin playing—songs that were always greeted with cheers of excitement, as we all knew how easy these catchy tunes are to dance to. Most of us watched MTV often enough to have at least seen bits and pieces of the brilliant zombie-dance from the music video for "Thriller". But most of us also had VH1 on enough (or flipped through enough tabloid magazines) to have a general understanding of the controversy surrounding his child molestation accusations, his Neverland Ranch, his ever-changing nose and skin color, the incident when Jackson dangled his child Blanket off a hotel balcony, and his insistence that his children cover their faces when in public.

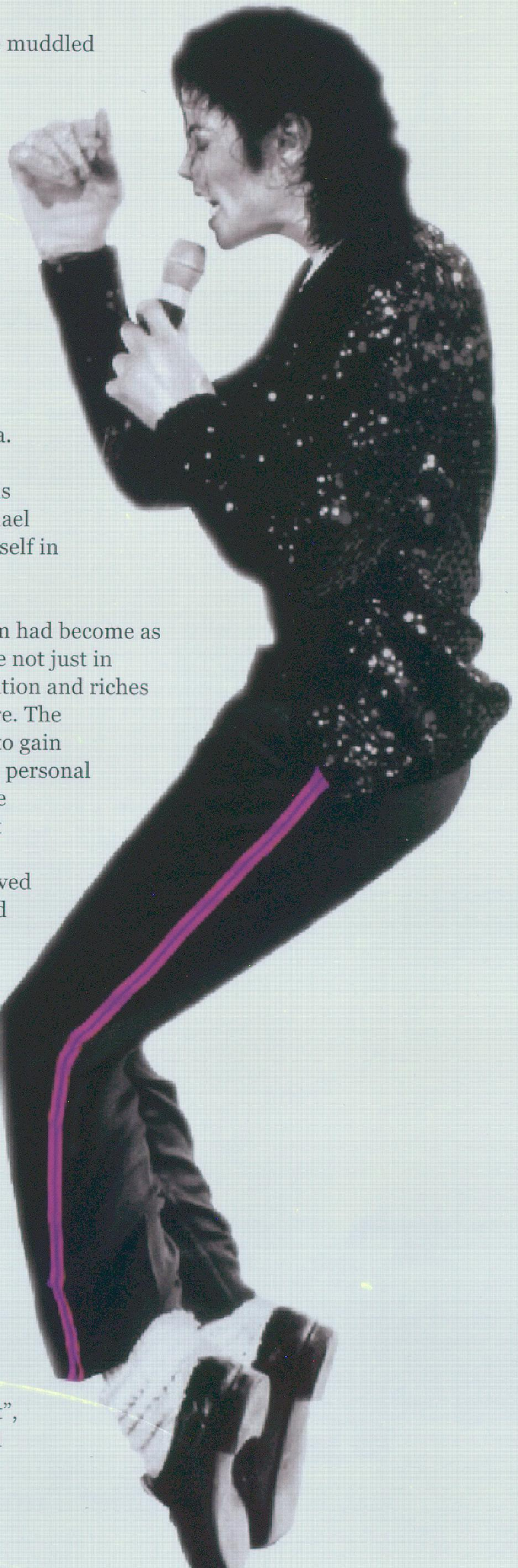
As I walked around Brooklyn the next morning, July 26th, the loss was already manifested on shirts which had his date of birth and date of death under an image of Jackson, wearing his stylized jacket and glove combo, doing his signature moon-walking move. Car windows rolled down to beat the sweltering summer heat revealed that most people were blasting his music. That night in Times Square, a flash-mob type performance of "Thriller" was done for crowds of eager fans and curious passers-by. Flash-mobs of "Thriller" are practically an annual happening in many major metropolitan cities in North America as well as Europe, so naturally after Jackson's death the performances multiplied and were evident all over the world, commemorating the legacy of his impact on music.

While our generation includes many music devotees who fully comprehend Jackson's impact on the history of music, most of us have always seen him as a complex, ever-present figure in the pop-culture obsessed world we live in. Our parents' generation grew up at the same time as Jackson, and saw him grow from the energetic, prodigious lead singer of the Jackson Five, to the young hit-maker and extraordinarily talented dancer, to the taboo figure he had become in recent years. While many of us watch videos and photos of his progression as a performing artist and person over the 50 years of his life, we may feel a confusing mixture of being both upset and sympathetic, but also horrified by his journey.

As someone who has done hip-hop dancing for the last five years, I know I have felt inspired by Michael Jackson, especially when my dance teacher explained his ground-breaking "Moonwalk" backward glide. The first time I felt the smoothness of the floor sliding under my foot and understood the illusion of the dance move, I admit, I felt cool—the cool that Jackson fans describe when seeing him onstage, dancing like he was born to do it. Jackson was a star that fans were hyped about the way any pop icon is admired. But the deep respect and obsession among Jackson fans goes way beyond being impressed by his slick and original dance style—Jackson was a symbol for racial unity.

He was one of the first accepted Black performers in the mainstream music world. He was a cross-over artist, whom African Americans, as well as Caucasians, loved. His music went from Motown to Pop, and he shined in both genres. Although he claimed to have a skin disease which caused him to need treatment, which then resulted in the total whitening of his skin, most of his Black fans still identified with him, even as his skin color changed before their eyes. His nose surgeries though, were more controversial to the Black community, as he underwent plastic surgery after plastic surgery, his nose forever getting thinner. This changed his whole appearance, from his wide-set nose associated with African-American facial features, to a more thin and pointed nose associated with Caucasians. It was assumed that his close friendships with female celebrities such as Elizabeth Taylor and Diana Ross influenced the aesthetic goals of his appearance.

As I easily transition from raving about his amazing dancing abilities, to commonly known facts about his appearance and personal life, I see that my perception of him has been completely manipulated by the media-machine of today, which is sickly driven by celebrity obsession. What I should be going on about is his impact on a global scale—his goals with charity—how he brought people together (not just in the Western world) but in developing countries as well. And as I bring that up, I feel the need to mention another commonly known fact about his personal life, and that is the obscene amounts of debt he was in despite the millions he felt he could give away.



It is difficult to write a piece to memorialize Jackson without having it become muddled by the scandals of his personal life. One could argue that it is not his "personal" life, when it comes to accusations of molesting children, mistreating his own children (or at least treating them oddly), and changing one's entire appearance. Most people feel those are issues which should certainly be brought to public attention, and acted upon accordingly. But that is just the issue with someone who grows up in the limelight—everything is fair game. They are public figures, even if they do not want it or like it. This means that these celebrities not only lack a normal childhood, but worse yet, every mistake they make is documented for the world to see.

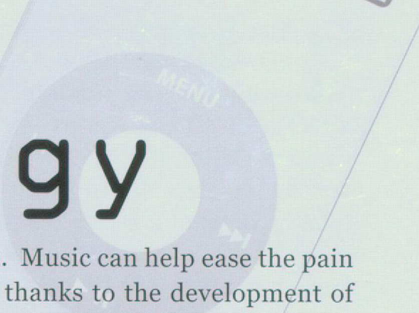
Regardless of what happened with the children Jackson entertained at Neverland Ranch, it is hard to deny that Jackson suffered from deep-seated psychological trauma as a child, causing him to adopt a Peter Pan type persona. He was forever caught in a childhood fantasy, unwilling to accept reality. Additionally, although he was known for his incredible humbleness towards his fame and talents, he did name two of his children Prince Michael (Prince Michael the First and Second). He also allegedly had a painting above his bed with himself in "The Last Supper" as Jesus.

This brings us to the idea of a musician in general—the obsession of his fandom had become as extreme as many other ill-fated stars such as Elvis Presley, where the fans were not just in awe of his music, but of him as a person. Although he achieved all the appreciation and riches of a successful artist, those things came with the high price of personal pressure. The pressure of fans who felt they knew Jackson, who would pay ridiculous prices to gain a seat at one of his sold-out shows, and who desired to know every detail of his personal likes and dislikes. With the rise of media, came the rise of the celebrity. Not the artist—the respected actor or musician, but the respected person. Then respect moved to obsession, and the medium of communication moved from radio, to television, to internet, each step bringing people that much closer to their beloved icons. And the power of these "celebrities" grew and grew. That is what enabled Jackson to hand-pick a doctor who would be willing to medicate him in the manner which sadly led to his premature death.

What is most important is that no matter how one feels about Jackson's legacy, there can be no argument that the music industry will be forever changed because of him; his raw talent and completely one-of-a-kind songs, his dancing and his kindness. If you do question this, especially if you have a soft spot for anything involving zombies, do yourself a favor and watch the "Thriller" music video. It is a much needed addition to your musical education, and if it does not leave you itching to learn the dance, I would be quite shocked.

And for the more alternative viewers, or for those who have seen the original plenty of times, check out a popular YouTube video of a performance done by Philippino prison inmates! The song is from Jackson's album of the same title, which remains the best selling record of all time since its release in 1982. As you listen to Jackson sing, "That this is thriller, thriller night/ 'Cause I can thrill you more than any ghost would ever dare try/ Thriller, thriller night", his words certainly remain true any night someone takes the time to listen, and especially for those who take the time to sing and dance along.

From 33's to MP3's: The Evolution of Music Technology



And so it began in 1878 with the invention of the phonograph by Thomas Edison. This device enabled sound to be recorded and played back using a piece of tinfoil, a metal cylinder, a needle and a diaphragm. Emile Berliner later improved upon this system with his inventions of both the gramophone and flat-disc record in 1887, allowing musical recordings to be mass produced and sold to the public for the first time in history. The emergence of radio broadcasting stations in the early 1920s has since remained a vital means of channelling music to people all over the world. It is these technologies, which were created over 100 years ago, that have shaped and defined the way music is heard, shared and experienced through time. However, with the inception of computers and the internet, we have been introduced to entirely new ways of recording and accessing sound. This has transformed the once purely tangible world of music into a digital and virtual playground.

The physical means of delivering music (i.e. record, cassette, compact disc) have evolved to better suit our wants and needs, just like any other form of technology. We wanted something more durable, so RCA Victor gave us the vinyl record in 1931. We wanted something smaller, so Philips released the cassette tape in 1962. We wanted something with higher quality sound, so in 1982 Sony and Philips presented us with the compact disc. Now that we had something that gave us a crystal clear listening experience, along with durability and compactness, which did not require us to flip sides to hear the other half of an album, what more could we possibly we need?

How about free music rights at our fingertips? Let's abolish the ideas of purchasing music and supporting the artists we love listening to. Let's have Napster! In 1999, college student Shawn Fanning launched the internet's first mp3 file-sharing program, enabling people worldwide to upload and download music for absolutely no cost. Napster, even with its forced shut-down in 2001, inspired many other mp3 file-sharing sites to emerge. The accumulation of these sites has been the perceived perpetrator in causing CD sales in the United States to plummet from $14.6 billion USD in 1999, to $8.5 billion USD in 2008, perhaps signifying a mass extermination of the physical storage of music.

In addition to introducing a new means of getting music, the internet has also increased the accessibility of world music. Websites such as YouTube allow us to instantly listen and experience a musical performance from an artist on the other side of the planet. We can share our own personal musical experiences with people all over the world; while those in distant countries can share with us in the same way. These resources help us to learn, understand, and enjoy the vastly different musical experiences the world's societies have to offer.

Along with the invention of the internet and digital music files, came the mp3 player – surfacing in 1998 from Eiger Labs as the MPMan F10. Personal portable music players had arrived on the market 19 years earlier, beginning with the cassette-playing Sony Walkman. This innovative product was the first to allow people to isolate their minds from their surroundings and transcend into the melodic universe of whatever was playing through their headphones. Music could then be experienced individually, whenever and wherever the individual pleases.

In addition to providing us with increased access to music, MP3 players can also permit us to distance ourselves from our environment; inhibiting our communication with and awareness of the people and objects around us that co-exist amongst us. They can cause us to ignore warning signals while walking along a busy street, restrain the growth of relationships, and limit the amount of information we can soak-up from a particular event. They take away the social aspect of music – and how it can so beautifully serve as a tool to connect us to one another.

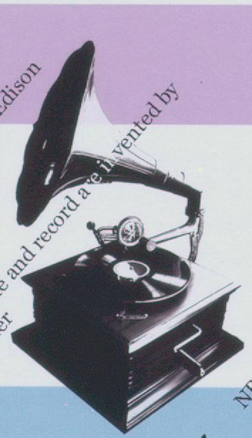
Since the invention of sound recording and playback in the late 1800s, technology has enabled us to incorporate music into almost every aspect of our lives. Records gave people the first opportunity to finally hear their favourite bands play right in their own living room. Music can help ease the pain of driving to and from work, thanks to the development of cassette tapes and compact discs. Portable stereos initiated the idea of using music to provide individuals with a means to escape from the world around them. Mp3 players hold hundreds of thousands of songs on a device we can fit in our pocket. The internet has created a digital black market where people can download complete, high quality tracks and albums, without paying a single cent to the artists that created them; but also connects us to an infinite library of music, containing artists from all over the globe and all walks of life. Ultimately, technology has shaped music for the better, continuously increasing its availability and accessibility, and allowing people all over the globe to unite and share the one thing we can all enjoy together.

Valerie
Mais

-1877 Sound recording is invented

-1878 The phonograph is invented by Thomas Edison

-1888 The gramophone and record are invented by Emile Berliner



-1927 NBC launches 2 radio stations, beginning the "Golden Age" of radio

-1931 First vinyl record introduced by RCA, with a speed of 33 1/3 rpm.

-1949 RCA releases the 45 rpm. record

-1962 The cassette tape is invented by Phillips

-1979 The first portable stereo, The Walkman is released by Sony

-1981 MTV debuts with its first music video, "Video Killed the Radio Star" by the Buggles

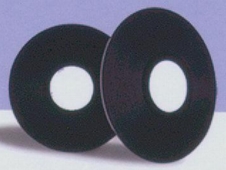
-1982 Compact-Discs are released by Sony and Phillips

-1998 The first MP3 player, MPMAN F10, is created by Eiger Labs

-1999 The first P2P music sharing software, Napster, is launched

-2001 Apple instroduces the iPod; BitTorrent is launched

-2003 Apple launches iTunes



A Brief Timeline of Recorded Music History

P2P

Feature

Four Up-And-Coming Songwriters and Musicians at U of T

Feature

The University of Toronto is a very big place, there is no contesting that. Every day, the average student comes across hundreds of different young adults in an attempt to get from point A to point B. But, have you ever wondered if any of those anonymous strangers could cause you to unabashedly rock out in your room? Well, some of those strangers are troubadours out to change the way you listen to music, and it's all made within the walls of our own University. Here are four acts that are sitting right under your nose (in no particular order):

Number 4: Cartoons

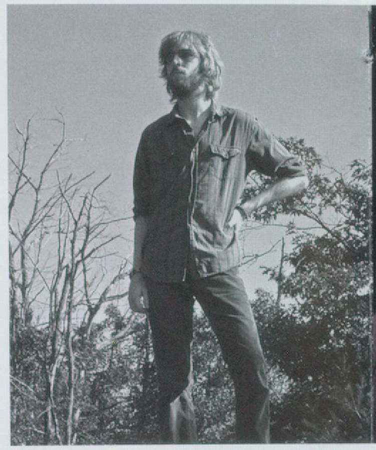
Matt Whatton (bass), Alex Nathan (drums) and Denholm Whale (vocals/guitar) met in residence at New College. Little did they know that a year later they would come together to form Cartoons; a band that melds the blues style of groups like The Yardbirds, with modern rock lo-fi bands, not unlike Pavement or The Brian Jonestowne Massacre (but without the dysfunction). Their music can best be described as "energetic". Lyrically, they are introspective and delicate; but musically, the hard-hitting drums and fuzz-box distortion grab your attention right from the kick-off. Cartoons is the type of band you dance around to in your underwear, mouthing the words while using a hairbrush as a makeshift microphone.

"We met in the New College Funk Band," Nathan explains, "We got to know each other after some post-rehearsal drinks. We began as an acoustic-folk duo called Gettysburg. Denholm was on guitar and I was on drums." After the addition of two members and electric instruments, the modern incarnation of Cartoons took shape. The name Cartoons is expository of the feel the band is trying to create in their music. Nathan recalls the importance of the name cartoons, and its significance to the rest of their band "Denholm came up with it. The idea of 'Cartoons' came up when he thought of his childhood. Everyone can relate to it." This type of child-like carefree attitude is a good way to approach their music for the first time.

After recording their first self-titled demo, Cartoons got involved with a website entitled Pay What You Want Online (www.paywhatyouwantonline.com). Their aim is to help unsigned bands get exposure in the Canadian music scene while donating some of the proceeds to charity. "We started recording the EP last winter. It took a long time, and we went through some line-up changes, but we haven't been playing together that long. It was a learning experience."

Cartoons are on myspace at www.myspace.com\wearecartoons. They can also be found by searching "Cartoons music" on Facebook. Check out their page on Pay What You Want Online at http://www.paywhatyouwantonline.com/Featured.aspx.

Number 3: Daniel Gray



Daniel Gray's song writing is the kind that creeps up behind you to whisper hello in your ear. Pulling from such influences as The National and Grizzly Bear, his music is a euphoric blend of contemporary folk and rock, with a bit of classical orchestration thrown in for good measure. It's hard to imagine that this large sound comes from a Philosophy major here at U of T. Grey is a friendly guy who is proud of his music without ego. When asked about the grandiose arrangements on the album, he gives a response that is to be expected of any young artist. "I hear finished arrangements in my head, but changes develop. The different parts are assembled in my head, but they generally come together naturally." Gray has been no stranger to performing in front of an audience. This past March, he was featured in the Canadian Music Week.

His most recent independent release *The Future's Past EP* contains ornate instrumentation that soars through the room. To promote the album, he busked around TTC Subway stations for the Stephen Lewis foundation as part of their "Dare to Remember" campaign. This young, up and coming artist is already trying to put his art to good use. "The idea was to do something you usually wouldn't do in order to raise money for the foundation," Grey explains, "The funds will go towards alleviating the suffering of AIDS and HIV patients." This foray into activism early on in his still budding career is a promising step. With his first stellar EP under his belt, the potential for Grey to develop into a noteworthy musician is sky high. Despite the artistic success of *A Future's Past EP*, one gets the sense that Grey is nowhere near reaching his peak. If he still has a long way to go, than there is no reason not to bookmark his name in our consciousness.

To download *A Future's Past EP*, go to www.danielgraymusic.com for a free download. You can also find him on Myspace at www.myspace.com/danielgreysongs. He can also be found on Facebook by searching for "Daniel Grey".

Number 2: Bryan Arcand

Bryan Arcand is a musical descendant of the 60s folk troubadours while adding his own contemporary touches. On the surface, he may seem like any other English Specialist gracing U of T's hallowed halls, but if you give him a guitar, everything changes. His contemporary twist on folk music may seem new and innovative, yet Arcand would be the last to admit it: "You can't pinpoint creativity, it just happens. It just comes to you; it's something you can't touch." His new LP *Folk*, released this past August, spins a narrative yarn stretching from "the corner of Hastings and Main" in Vancouver, to his tales of busking around the streets of Toronto. After nine months of recording, Arcand describes it as "his baby". The record is exemplary in its use of narration, while simultaneously touching on themes surrounding self-discovery and personal growth.

A music lover from an early age, Arcand seemed destined to play the guitar. "When I was a kid, I made a cardboard guitar," he explains, "and learned the fingerings on it." This passion translates well to the stage, and has crafted an air tight live band. Arcand's band includes Justin Dhama, who was the producer on *Folk* and played the drums on a few tracks. This friendship helped shape both the on-stage dynamic of the group, as well as the record as a whole, and contributes to the integrity of the live show. The songs on the record take on new life when performed live, and it is more than apparent that Arcand is ecstatic when on stage. "Getting on stage," he explains, "creates a moment of bliss that removes me from the pains of responsibility." And this feeling of bliss bleeds to the audience.

To get your own copy of Folk, visit www.arcand.bigcartel.com or www.arcandmusic.com. Arcand can be found on myspace at www.myspace.com/arcandmusic. He can be found on Facebook by searching for "Bryan Arcand".

Number 1: Make Your Exit

Make Your Exit are the type of band that make crafting such an ornate collision of voice and instruments seem effortless. Jeff Buckley, Mike "Skidboat" Denby, Oliver Pauk, Mike Dellios and Mike Thomson do not seem to be trying too hard, instead they choose to have fun. The songs themselves are beautifully crafted. The bulk of the songs rely on multi-layered vocal harmonies and energetic rhythms led by the guitar, bass and drum hooks. However, what makes their sound distinct, is their choice to include a saxophone. Make Your Exit makes music for lazy, sunny Sunday afternoons, while sharing a beer or three with a few friends.

"The name 'Make Your Exit' has a specific meaning," explains Buckley, "it's the idea of making a move towards something you feel strongly about, or something that you feel passionate about, moving into situations that are more fulfilling." This name seems to serve as a manifesto for the band. Their new EP *Remind Me The Reason I Came* is just as easy-going as the band itself. The record release party was held at Sneaky Dee's last September, and effectively sold out the venue. Despite the ego-stroking success, Pauk still felt bad that not everyone could make it in: "I started handing out CDs to the people outside, just going 'sorry guys!'" A former member of the Hart House Symphonic band, Pauk is an Economics specialist. He has been able to take what he has learned there and apply it to his new band.

On stage, the true effortless energy that is present in their music comes through in their on-stage interactions. They are out to have fun, and are determined to make sure that the audience is too. Beyond the fantastic music they are able to create as a whole, it is evident that they share an intrinsic bond that gives their music immense depth.

Their new EP Remind Me The Reason I Came is available on iTunes or in CD stores. You can also check them out at www.myspace.com/makeyourexit and on Facebook by searching "Make Your Exit".

Meg Tinmouth

Over-Think-ing ... the Underground

It's been three decades since Afrika Bambaataa, DJ Kool Herc, Kurtis Blow and their associates founded a music culture in the parks and projects of the Bronx and Brooklyn, that would come to be known as hip hop. The scene was marked by an emphasis on musical breaks and loops, party-starting vocalists (who would come to be known as emcees), a vibrant dance and graffiti culture, and above all, an enthusiasm for urban and racial empowerment in the largely depressed black and Latino slums.

Yet 30 years later, the face of hip hop is barely recognizable. While some of the more electronic and funky sounds made their way to Detroit and Chicago to form the music we know as techno and house, hip hop matured in New York and by the mid to late 80's had not only spread across the country to the west and south, but had broken into pop culture in a major way. Today, commercial hip hop dominates the pop charts, but seems a distant cry from the fun and actively uplifting tunes of Grandmaster Flash and Melle Mel.

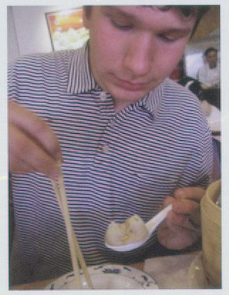
Indeed, many critics of today's "mainstream hip hop" and "gangsta rap" have noted this argument. It's almost daily that I hear someone summarize "rap" as "all about hoes, money, guns and crack". I differ from the crowd when I say I wish that ultra mainstream rap did in fact address aspects of urban life. Hip hop has always served the purpose of representing and addressing its community, the largely impoverished and marginalized Black and Latino ghettoes of North America. Public Enemy once called it "the black CNN". In fact, I think critics of mainstream rap are confused about the actual content of the music. The rappers dominating the charts, like Lil' Wayne, Drake, and even Jay-Z's last album aren't "gangsta rap", and they aren't voices for violence and crime—they're about partying, which is why they're popular. Their music is vacant of meaning, but it's harmless.

There have always been advocates for "real" or socially conscious "underground" rap. These voices decry the materialistic and criminal tendencies of some rappers as against the spirit of hip hop and point to supposedly "underground" artists like Talib Kweli (who visited U of T during Frosh Week this year), Jedi Mind Tricks, Blue Scholars, Atmosphere and a slew of others. They feel these artists are superior and more representative of the "underground" hip hop spirit.

However, standing in front of the stage at Varsity Stadium, surrounded by what appeared to be dozens of fratboys wearing fitted caps and rapping along with every word of a tired looking Kweli, I felt farther from "real" hip hop than ever. As Kweli stumbled over critical platitudes commenting *on* rather than *from* a variety of political and economical topics, I thought more and more about the music of hip hop's founders. I strongly feel that the reason this music was so important to its community and effective in communicating its message, was that it was firmly located within the sphere of the Black and Latino ghettoes in New York; only later reaching hoods everywhere and then undergoing commercialization. Kweli and his peers, as cool as their social critiques sound, aren't rapping in the reality of today, underground or above.

Much of the real "underground" music of the last 15 years has been the much criticized gangsta rap, which experienced success among communities of hip hop lovers everywhere but hardly crack the Top 40. New York hardcore rap gave us widely appreciated acts like Wu-Tang Clan, Boot Camp Clik, Nas, Public Enemy, Biggie Smalls, and countless others rapping about "the New York state of mind". The frequently censored and criticized West Coast rappers like Ice Cube, N.W.A., Snoop Doggy Dogg and Westside Connection were rapping about their neighborhood condition. Southern artists like UGK, OutKast, Goodie Mob, Master P, Cash Money Millionaires, 8Ball & MJG, and their peers all worked on independent, entrepreneurial labels making musically complex records that addressed reality of the urban slums they came from. Although many of these artists are popular, not only were their legacies years in the making; they had little help from major record labels.

Now of course, being a white kid from semi-suburban Philadelphia, I'm by no means the authority on what it's like to grow up in the ghetto. These are the politics of representation. I wouldn't make a convincing rapper, and maybe my commentary is undermined by my background. Yet I grew up on hip hop and am consistently astonished by people who fail to appreciate the distinction between the "harder" and "commercial" side of hip hop. Instead, they embrace irrelevant artists as "underground".



Jonathan Valelly

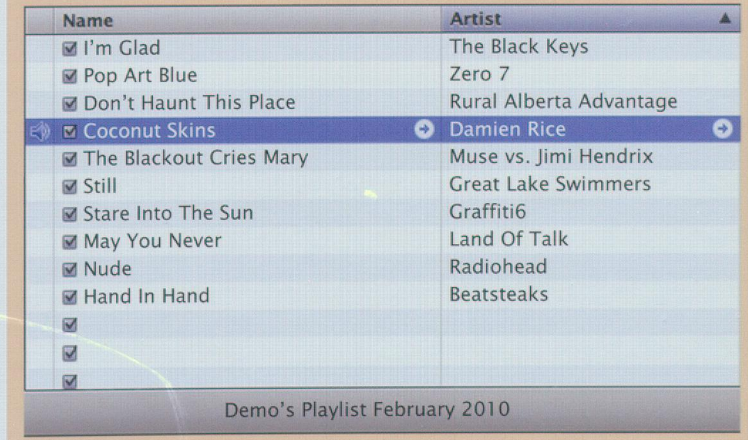
Lil' Jon and the East Side Boyz *Crunk Juice* CD Cover

www.rap-wallpapers.com

"THEIR MUSIC IS VACANT OF MEANING, BUT IT'S HARMLESS."

Photograph by Rachel Chepesiuk

Demo.'s Playlist



	Name	Artist ▲
	☑ I'm Glad	The Black Keys
	☑ Pop Art Blue	Zero 7
	☑ Don't Haunt This Place	Rural Alberta Advantage
🔊	☑ Coconut Skins	Damien Rice
	☑ The Blackout Cries Mary	Muse vs. Jimi Hendrix
	☑ Still	Great Lake Swimmers
	☑ Stare Into The Sun	Graffiti6
	☑ May You Never	Land Of Talk
	☑ Nude	Radiohead
	☑ Hand In Hand	Beatsteaks
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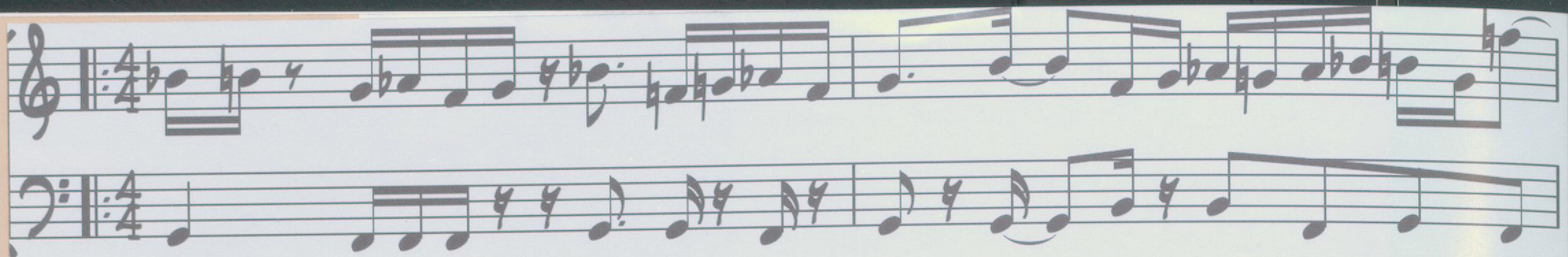
Demo's Playlist February 2010



Classical Music in Modern-Day Society

Most people view classical music as an aristocratic, cultured, and long established form of music in our society. Moreover, most people also know that most classical musicians are very talented. Classical music has become the most established and institutionalized form of music we know. It is odd that only a small portion of our population actually understands and appreciates classical music, many of whom are musicians who play classical music themselves.

A famous case of the general public's lack of appreciation for classical musicians is Joshua Bell's busking experiment. During rush hour on a cold winter morning in a bustling Washington DC subway station, Joshua Bell, one of the world's most renowned violinists, busked in front of thousands of passing commuters. He performed six Bach pieces for about an hour on a Stradivarius violin. During this hour he made $32, nobody recognized him, and only six people stopped to watch and listen for a minute or two. This is astounding considering people would pay hundreds of dollars to go see him in a concert hall. At the same time if a pop performer such as Britney Spears or Kanye West were to just take the train in a Washington DC subway, they would be swarmed with fans.

Classical music is often seen as a tool or a symbol. Many kids are pushed into classical music at an early age, often times against their will. Parents believe that making music makes you smarter. Generally "music" in this statement is narrowed down to pushing their children into piano or violin lessons at the established and highly regarded Royal Conservatory of Music (RCM), even if the kid shows a preference towards the electric guitar or drums. At the same time the parents themselves may have very little knowledge of music. Nevertheless, they strongly enforce learning only classical music.

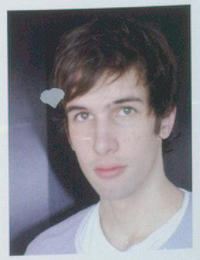
One criticism of the Conservatory is that the learning style is very mechanical and makes music something that kids have to study, instead of an art form based on self expression. Obtaining a grade 10 RCM certificate in piano requires no creativity, just the ability to perform what is requested by the syllabus. What the RCM does well is the technical aspects such as technique, music reading, and ear training. The RCM can also give grounding on what music is and how it can be described and notated. The problem is that these skills are often kept strictly in the realm of what they are studying at the conservatory.

This institutionalization of classical music creates a divide between music that people enjoy, and music people play because it will "make you smarter" or music that has been well established. The problem is, not only does this create a fair degree of stigma for classical music, it limits the development of music in our society in general.

Many musicians who have not been formally trained could benefit from aspects of classical music and how it is taught. For example Born of Osiris' self taught guitarist, Tosin Abasi, said in an interview, "Just from going to school, I've got way more comprehension of harmonies, and there's more extensions in the chords. They're more colourful."

On the other hand, formally trained classical musicians and classical music institutions, with the exception of a few schools such as Berkley in Boston, tend to stick to classical music. Classical musicians are in the best position to explore different genres of music because of their technical ability and knowledge. Yet, many classical musicians tend to confine themselves to classical music. It is unlikely that a classically trained pianist would go off to play in a metal band, even if they enjoyed that music more than classical music, and knew that they would be more motivated and better at it. This is partly because classical music is less financially risky; but also, it can be argued that going into classical music is easier because it is something that has already been done and does not require as much creative thinking to make it work.

Nevertheless, knowing music's status in our society, even though more people like pop, metal and hip-hop as opposed to classical, it is unlikely that there is going to be a formal pop, metal, or hip-hop class at the Faculty of Music at the University of Toronto any time soon.



Michael
Stecky-Efanits

Evolution and Allusion: Does Originality Still Exist?

Iulia
Ciobanu

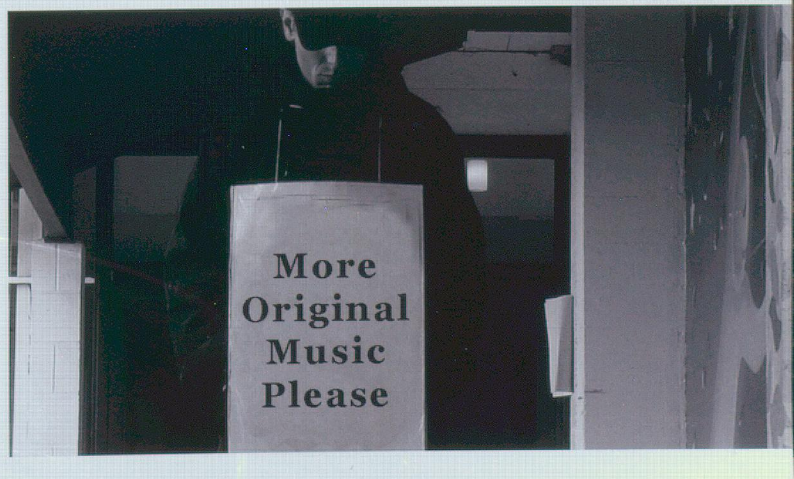
In the modern artist's life, one of the most essential qualities that can perpetuate success is originality. With the astounding number of musicians and variety of musical styles currently present in the world, every hopeful and determined dreamer must find a way to make him or herself stand out from the rest. Websites such as MySpace, YouTube, PureVolume, Last.fm and Facebook, to name a few, have allowed innumerous musicians to expose themselves to the public and have created competition on a much larger scale than in the past. Nowadays, originality in music is increasingly difficult to find, yet more important than ever before. There is also a common worry that all mainstream music sounds the same within each genre, and that innovation is rare. Therefore, the question that we find ourselves asking in desperation is, can originality really exist with such a long history of musical creation and the constant influence from other art that taints every musician's individuality?

Society now holds an extensive collection of music stemming from the earliest evidence of its existence from which it can study its evolution. From the first western notations, written by monks, to the potent and driving rhythms found in African cultures, to the music of our present day, there has been a tremendous amount of revelation and innovative thinking that has propelled changes within the field. The Baroque era saw the advent of functional harmony and familiar chord progressions, the classical era witnessed the creation of sonata-allegro form and from the Romantic era stemmed the art-song. The oldest and most primal pieces can often be found within later works of music. For instance, "Twinkle Twinkle Little Star" originated from the French folk song called "ah, vous dirais-je, Maman" and also comes in the forms of "Baa Baa Black Sheep" and the "Alphabet Song". The bass line from Pachelbel's *Canon in D* can be heard in various songs, the most obvious example being Vitamin C's *Graduation Song*. Amy Winehouse's *Tears Dry On Their Own* uses the refrain from Marvin Gaye's *Ain't No Mountain High Enough*. With so much music already created, is there anything left to compose that hasn't already been taken? Can any new forms still be created?

The birth of the camera resulted in a fusion of visual and musical expression known as the music video. Advancing technology brought forth many new genres such as electronica and dance/techno and allowed on-the-spot arrangement of music to become the art of the DJ. Though it is easy to include past creations with more recent ones, it is still possible to come up with completely unprecedented musical material.

However, the intentional reference or allusion to past and present influences poses another problem in the pursuit of originality. Can the use of another artist's ideas as the motivation for our own constitute them as original? Are lyrics that express a unique take on an original poem considered wholly novel? Regina Spektor's *Lacrimosa* alludes to a character in Greek mythology, Icarus. The Pixies' *Debaser* makes reference to Buñuel's surrealist short film *un chien andalou*. Arctic Monkeys mention the Montagues and Capulets of Romeo and Juliet in *I Bet That You Look Good on the Dance Floor*. The fact that these songs contain other creations does not make them any less unique. Inspiration is the driving force for original ideas. For when some small portion of a familiar work has an outstanding effect or ignites a spark within a creative being, it may precipitate a conception entirely independent of the inspiring source.

Therefore, after delving into these two aspects that can impede originality, we may come to the conclusion that it can still be found in modern times. It is very difficult to achieve, and is sometimes overlooked, but it can indeed occur. Just as life may inspire art, art itself can inspire art. There is no need to believe that the existence of established works and ideas can completely efface the possibility of new ones. With the increasing span of music's history and diversity, comes the increasing pressure to create highly individual material; it is this pressure, along with the continued presence of inventive minds, that can ensure such creations. Not to worry.



Life of An Unsigned Band in Toronto

"You said that the four bands would split the cover-charge money equally. There were easily 100 people in the place over the course of the night, each paying $4, so why have we only been given $20?" asks the young band member.

"Well, half way through the girl working the door reduced the cover to $2, and then towards the end let some people in for free," replied the promoter cautiously, before swiftly changing tack with the practiced ease of a politician. "You know, these open-guest list nights work out for everyone. You play The __________, bring some people down, create a buzz, we help new music – do you know some of the great acts that have come through The __________?"

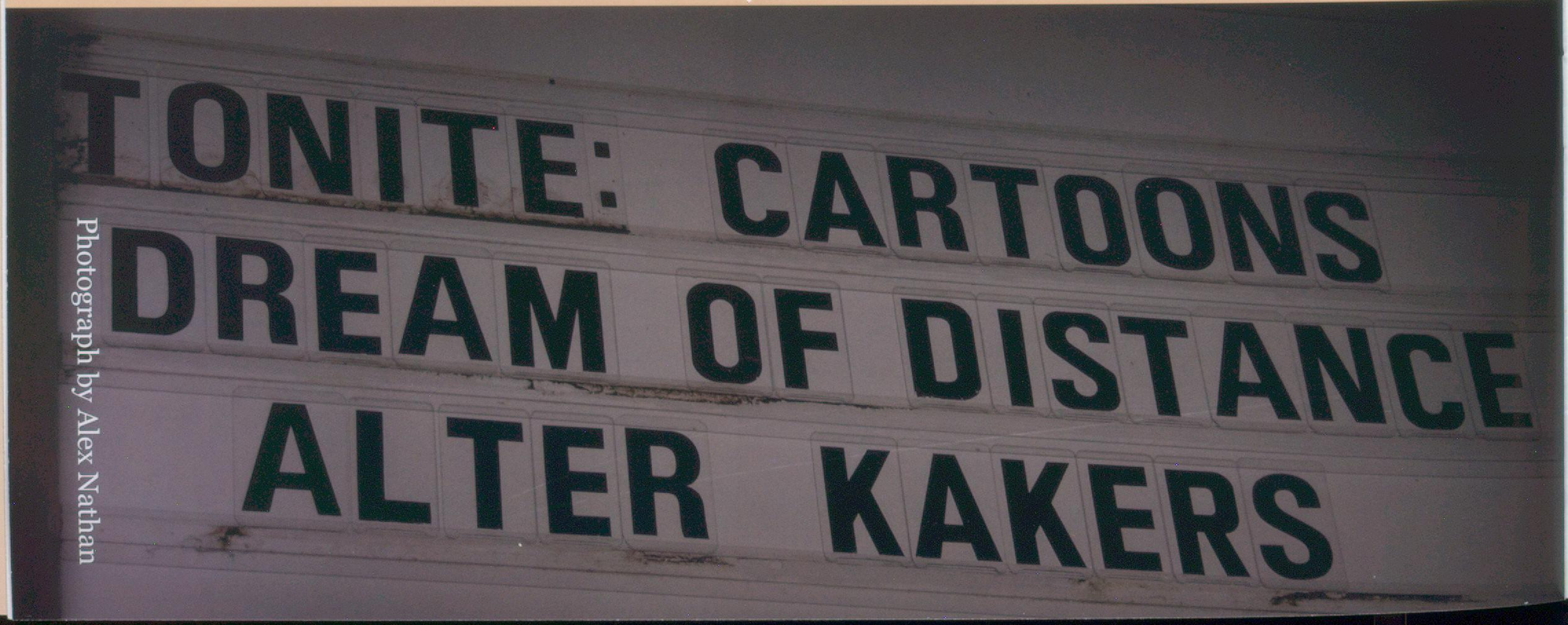
"That's really not the point," the kid stabbed back. He didn't have much time and knew that his clothes would be out of style by the end of the list, if it was reeled off. At this interjection however, the promoter got a little tactful.
"Listen, if the open-guest list thing isn't for you guys, that's ok. We can go our separate ways and you can try some other venues." And with that, the venue had the band over a barrel.

This kind of conversation is a frequent occurrence in the lives of unsigned bands in Toronto. Most venues prefer to delegate the organization of their shows, so they hire promoters. As a result, promoters need to make a living off the ambitions of others: the musicians that need places to play. Only once a band is big enough to be doing the venue a favour by playing there, rather than vice versa; will the band begin to avoid being taken advantage of.

One prominent venue on Queen East has a promoter who withholds the right to prevent a band from playing if they do not bring 30 people out on the night. There's the stick. However, bands are also promised the chance to meet 'label reps' after their performances. There's the faux carrot. Young (and some disconcertingly old) bands from all over the GTA get amped about the prospect of playing in front of record labels. They tell their friends, urge them to click 'attending' on Facebook, and some even organize buses to bring their pals along. It turns out, of course, that the 'label reps' are barely associated with label-subsidiaries, if at all. Meanwhile, their level of interest in each band is easily measured by how many "smokes" they step out for during sets.

It's not all bad though. There are some positive figures in Toronto's tepid musical cauldron. Dan Burke, for example, has been a promoter in the city for years. He gives bands a platform, and pays them fairly at *The Silver Dollar* and *Velvet Underground* amongst other venues. Moreover, the *Rearview Mirror* in Kensington Market also provides a great place for unsigned exposure. The key is finding rare friendly environments where talented expression is encouraged. Hopefully, for the sake of creative youth in Toronto, these environments will become role models rather than relics.

Alex
Nathan



Photograph by Alex Nathan

Review

Ohbijou Rocks the (Arbor) Room

Rachel
Chepesiuk

After a late start due to sound-check issues, Toronto-based band Ohbijou took to the stage at Hart House's Arbour Room, performing in front of a packed audience, on October 8th, 2009. The crowd ranged from young university frosh, to 20-something-year-old fans of Ohbijou, who wouldn't pass up seeing a free gig; to older patrons checking out what Hart House Open Stages had to offer that night. No matter the age or background, on the whole, the crowd was filled with positive vibes, lulled into the charming orchestral pop songs of Ohbijou.

> *"No matter the age or background, on the whole, the crowd was filled with positive vibes..."*

The show was conveniently timed, as the band had not only recently released their sophomore album, *Beacons*, but was also in the middle of its supporting tour. They have also been receiving many positive reviews for their latest release, including being named CBC Radio 3's "Artist of the Month" for August 2009. The set was a mix of songs from both albums, with (of course) a stronger focus on those from *Beacons* than from their premiere album, *Swift Feet for Troubling Times*. The songs themselves ranged from down-tempo, tender and slightly sorrowful, to allegretto pieces with smooth violins, crisp drum beats, and sometimes jangling rhythms on guitar or banjo. Vocalist and Ohbijou founder Casey Mecija's characteristic sweet, sweeping vocal melodies and harmonies moved the audience throughout the performance. Although there were some issues with sound quality, they did not inhibit the overall performance of the band, nor the audience's enjoyment. If anything, the band was in their element playing to a small and packed room, creating a cozy, even neighbour-like environment.

> *"If anything, the band was the most in their element playing to a small and packed room, creating a cozy, even neighbour-like environment."*

This comes as no surprise, as their familiarity with playing intimate settings comes in part from their participation in the Bellwood House, a co-op of musicians which hosted shows by various Toronto musicians; two of Ohbijou's members formerly lived there. This collective also recently released a compilation of songs, called *Friends in Bellwoods 2*, featuring a song by the musicians that have played in the Bellwood House. The proceeds from the album's sales go towards the Daily Bread Food Bank. Unfortunately, as Casey explained to the audience between songs, the Bellwood House had to be closed down due to structural issues. Casey also peppered the performance with some audience interaction, telling stories such as when playing in Europe, a fan told them that they "could really hear the Asian influence in their music." Casey awkwardly said thank you, saying that "my sister (Jenny, who also plays in the band) and I are half Filipino." It's this kind of shy self-consciousness that accentuates the band's charm and character. The audience moved along to the music, some simply head nodding, others tapping feet, while others were full-out swaying. After only an hour playing, the crowd left pleased and in good spirits; judging by the line-up at the merch table at the end of the gig, Ohbijou managed to win over a number of new fans.

Photograph by Jess Baumung

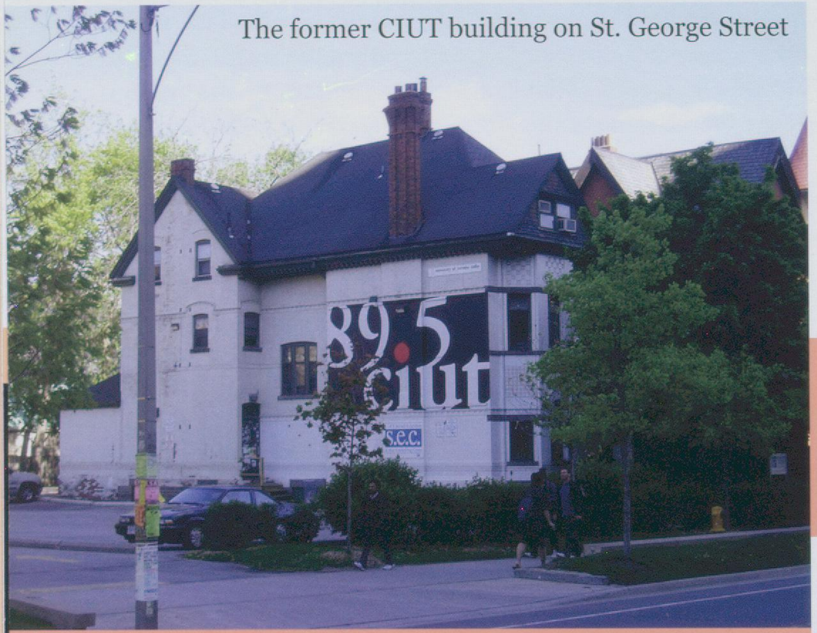
Ohbijou's sophomore release "Beacons" (2009) is available through Last Gang Records.

Interested in more?
Check out www.ohbijou.com

Capturing Toronto's cultures on a single frequency

Rachel
Chepesiiuk

I first started frequently listening to CIUT a few years ago, when my father had to drive me into Toronto every week for appointments. Most people tend to have a favourite radio station that they listen to when they're in the car or at work—wherever—sometimes even during commercials. Other people flip around from station to station, trying to find a song that appeals to them, switching the frequencies every time a commercial comes on. I am like that sometimes as well, and my father more so. While we were flipping through the channels, I came across a familiar song, but it was a song that I would never have expected to hear on the radio. I was intrigued: What radio station would be playing this song? By this band? After the song was finished, I waited to hear the name of the radio station playing this non-mainstream music. It was CIUT 89.5 FM, the University of Toronto radio station. I was hooked. I've embraced CIUT as my favourite radio station ever since.


The former CIUT building on St. George Street

"While commercial radio stations tend to focus on one or two genres of music, CIUT features as many as you can think of, even having several mixed in to one show."

After listening to CIUT at various other times, I found that the music and content in general, continually changed. The same radio station that was playing Torontonian/Canadian indie music at midday was playing hardcore metal only a few hours later, and was also playing classic folk music in the early evening. The breadth of programming is the beauty of CIUT and University radio stations in general. While commercial radio stations tend to focus on one to two genres of music, CIUT features as many as you can think of, even having several mixed into one show. This is reflected in CIUT's mission statement: "a non-profit alternative to mainstream media," providing "community access to the airwaves and offering programming that reflects the diverse elements of the communities we serve." Therefore, CIUT not only provides a variety of musical genres, but also includes those that are under or unrepresented by commercial media. In addition to music, CIUT also offers non-music based shows including poetry, spoken word, as well as news and discussion-based programs. The programming is not exclusively in English either; during the week, *Radio Punjab* takes over the airwaves from 2 to 3 p.m. and *Clave*, presented in Spanish, on Saturdays at 10 a.m. offers Latin music. Furthermore, many of the programs feature music from all over the world, not just from North America and Europe. Overall, CIUT strives to represent the numerous cultures and ethnicities found within the University of Toronto as well as the City of Toronto as a whole.

"In a sense, it creates open dialogue not only within a single music or cultural community, but also between the different music and cultural communities."

The DJs on CIUT are as varied as the programs themselves, but they all share a deep passion and knowledge of the music they play. DJs Dread-E Maximum and Majik Trix are vibrant and pumped with energy during their show *Drill Squad Mix Show*, a surprising feat considering that their show starts at 5:30 in the morning on Tuesdays. Michelle and Erin of *Blissful Thunder* (Thursdays, 12-2 p.m.) are more laid-back in their delivery, but are still engaging and pleasant to listen to. Minesh Mandoda uses a mellow voice on *No Beat Radio* (Mondays, 10-12 p.m.), providing either an agreeable complement or contrast to the alternative noise music featured on the show. Another aspect that the DJs on CIUT have in common is that they are all volunteers. Since its inception in 1965, CIUT has been volunteer-run by students, serving the University's student and community members as well as the Toronto (and now world) community at large. The open access of the airwaves allows a variety of music to represent the different cultures within the community. In a sense, it creates open dialogue not only within a single music or cultural community, but also amongst the different music and cultural communities.

Because CIUT is volunteer run and focuses on providing an alternative to mainstream media, it allows fringe markets and cultures to have a stronger presence. *Atlantic Ceilidh* (Thursdays, 7 p.m.) features traditional Celtic music from Eastern Canada, Ireland and Scotland and according to host Pat Simmonds, it is "the only show of it's kind in Canada," and thus helps foster the presence of Celtic music within Toronto. The same goes with programs such as *Karibuni* (Sundays, 6-8 p.m.), bringing music from all over Africa to Toronto audiences. As a non-profit, volunteer-run radio station, CIUT relies on donations from listeners; programs must make donation quotas in order to continue running, so the fact that shows like Atlantic Ceilidh and Karibuni are around proves that there is a market for them.

"There is nothing more rewarding than knowing that your program is serving a market that wouldn't otherwise be served."

Fundraising, however, does pose some issues for the station. The first issue is that it takes air-time away from music and other programming, which may turn away some listeners. Secondly, it can increase stress on the DJs, who are trying to reach their donation quotas, in order to stay on the air. The third issue is trying to reach listeners knowing that there are numerous other organizations asking for money at the same time; as Mr. Simmonds commented, "it's definitely overkill so you have to find a fine line," in order to effectively convince listeners. However, there is nothing more rewarding than knowing that your program is serving a market that would otherwise not be served.

There are, of course, several upsides to being a non-profit, volunteer-run radio station. There are not as many commercial advertisements to wait through, you can hear music that you may not hear anywhere else - except maybe on the internet - as well as debate programs, and the DJs have considerable freedom when it comes to assembling playlists. Though there are some obstacles with technology, "the main obstacle," Mr. Simmonds says,"is the CANCON requirement," which mandates a minimum quota of Canadian content that must be played. Despite the obstacles, it's these advantages that make CIUT a great radio station; in Mr. Simmonds' opinion, "CIUT is by far the best radio station downtown."

Overall, CIUT has an important role in promoting and maintaining various forms of music and culture, both local and global, within the University of Toronto and the City of Toronto. It offers a wide range of programming to suit any listener's needs. Enjoy discussing animal rights? There's a program for that. Enjoy listening to reggae and dub? There are several programs for that. Interested in listening to debates about issues in democracy and politics? There is an award-winning program for that. If you feel that the mainstream commercial radio stations are not fulfilling your needs, or even if you just want to try out something new, then be sure to check out CIUT 89.5 FM.

For more information, visit www.ciut.fm

Photograph by Rachel Chepesiuk

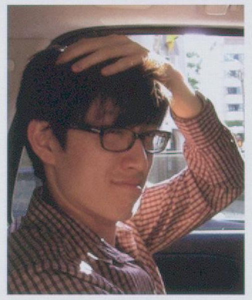
While My (Plastic) Guitar Gently Weeps

It seems that The Beatles have not only conquered all forms of entertainment, but pop culture itself. Considering their undeniable level of popularity throughout the past four decades, it's strange that no videogame devoted to the Fab Four has been created, until now. The truth is that videogames have never provided the proper vehicle to convey the most important aspect of The Beatles, their music. The onset of band-based rhythm games such as Rock Band and Guitar Hero provide the ideal platform for John, Paul, George and Ringo to take computer-generated form. Although a few fans still have their favourite Beatles song available solely at the karaoke bar, the game will still provide an enjoyable experience for music fans and gamers alike.

One thing is obvious before you start; this is The Beatles: Rock Band, and not the other way around. There are editions such as Guitar Hero: Metallica, Guitar Hero: Aerosmith and even Guitar Hero: Van Halen; but here, The Beatles take precedence before the game franchise itself. The Beatles: Rock Band's objective is to loyally re-tell the story of the most influential band of all time. The story, according to the game, begins with The Beatles' roots at The Cavern Club and chronologically progresses throughout their career from The Ed Sullivan Show to Shea Stadium, Abbey Road Studios and to the Apple Corps rooftop. The game's devotion to historical accuracy extends to you, the gamer; there are no drum solos or vocal improvisations to be had anywhere as each song is found in its complete and unaltered form. In terms of the Beatles themselves, each character is a cartoon replica of their real-life counter-part. Incredible attention is paid to detail, from the medals on their Sgt. Pepper jackets, to Paul's scruffy beard during the Abbey Road days.

The greatest problem with any musical compilation, be it a greatest hits record or music videogame, lies in the track-list. Every Beatles fan has a different favourite track, making an ideal set-list virtually out of reach. Although The Beatles: Rock Band makes a valiant effort, it definitely falls short in this aspect. Many favourites are included in the available song list (45 are immediately available to play), but the fact that clear-cut gems like "A Day in the Life" and "All You Need is Love" are only available as downloadable tracks for $2.00 each seems like a bit of a money-grab. However, the exclusion of songs like "Blackbird" and "She Said She Said" from the game altogether makes the track-list a little disappointing. That being said, the track-list is a great starting point for new Beatles fans looking for an introduction to their music.

Despite these soundtrack issues, The Beatles: Rock Band provides a unique gaming experience that will please long-time fans as well as attract many younger ones. Loyalists will get the opportunity to re-experience Beatlemania from a unique and interactive perspective, while newly converted fans will have the pleasure of discovering music that shaped the culture we live in.



Andrew Zhai

www.last.fm

Elvis Costello, Elton John and a Passion for Music: a True *Spectacle*

"Elvis Costello, Elton John, a large piano and a wonderful group of musicians, what you're about to see really is a spectacle" - Spectacle Season 1

Spectacle with Elvis Costello is an incredible program that combines the best of talk and music television into a one-hour masterpiece fit for any music lover. Conceived and developed in Canada, it is hosted by the legendary Elvis Costello, with Elton John as its executive producer. The episodes consist of in-depth interviews with phenomenal names in music, as well as unique performance collaborations that do not otherwise happen live in concerts. To date, guests have included James Taylor, Smokey Robinson, Diana Krall, She and Him (Zooey Deschanel and M. Ward), Jenny Lewis, and many others from varying styles and genres; including pop, rock, jazz, country and even opera. There really is something for viewers of all ages and tastes.

During its first season on television, Spectacle averaged 506 000 viewers, ranking it as one of Canada's top 10 new shows of the year. This proved that there is definitely an audience out there for a stimulating and enriching program about music, beyond mere guest appearances on late night talk shows or music channels.

What's the trick to Costello's success? He stated in an interview with the Canadian Press, "I think it's good to go into everything you do as if it's the first or last thing you're going to do." It has always been clear that Costello is extremely clever when it comes to music, but Spectacle gives him a chance to connect in candid conversations with other musicians about their creative processes— all the while allowing the viewer to listen in. The program is essentially a forum where creative minds come together to explore music from all angles and aspects.

Executive producer Elton John raved about Costello in a CTV press release "he is the foremost expert on pop music, I thought it would be sensational to use his knowledge and intelligence to explore the artistry of musicians and other fascinating people involved in making great music." The inclusion of "other fascinating people" is not just a matter of speech. Bill Clinton also made an appearance on the program, speaking candidly about his dream of becoming a saxophone player. Referring to his youth he lamented, "back then you couldn't make a living being a saxophone player, you had to do the clubs and stay up all night...I would have done it if I had thought I could have been the greatest there ever was..." And so he decided, with no rational logic to go into politics. "No one in my family had ever been in politics, we had no connections..."

Spectacle exposes the inner sentiments of its guests, attempting to bring to light the passions and curiosities of celebrities, which might otherwise have been obscured by fame. With a perfect mix of interviews and performances, Spectacle is, well, just that—a truly remarkable sight to see.

http://www.elviscostello.com/

Above: Elvis Costello interviews U2.
Top left: Elvis Costello.

Sarah Ramsaran

Follow the 61(.com)

Are you in desperate need of some new music, and ready to explore? If so, the website called, thesixtyone.com is your Mount Everest. Essentially a platform designed to increase exposure and communication between independent artists and their audiences, thesixtyone.com sounds a lot like MySpace or Last.fm. You might wonder what it is that is so novel about the idea of facilitating artist and fan-exchanges. The answer is, well, nothing. But, it is not the idea that makes thesixtyone.com so innovative, it is the execution. As the website's creators James Miao and Samuel Hsiung explain, the name thesixtyone is reminiscent of Highway 61, the "Blues Highway" that connects the Northern and Southern States. Numerous musicians have famously traveled this road, such as B.B. King and Muddy Waters. Furthermore, Elvis grew up in the housing projects along this highway, in Mississippi.

"Highway 61 was the road by which people left to find better opportunities. And by leaving they took their music to the world," Miao and Hsiung claim. In this spirit, thesixtyone.com is subtitled as "a music adventure", and the layout of the website has several features to get you started exploring. You can either listen to a stream of random songs, or select a specific genre. The genres range from rock to pop, reggae to classical music and hip hop to country. In addition, there is a mood section where you can listen to anything from chill to crazy. You can also either choose from one specific genre, or you can cross all of them.

If you like a song you can "heart" it (there really is a tiny heart shaped button you can click on), which helps the song become popular. Every time someone else hearts "your" song, you receive points and build up a reputation that increases your influence on what is "hot right now" (one of the categories).

Once you create a profile you are immediately invited to go on quests to get to higher levels, which enable bonus features such as maximizing the amount of hearts you have per day. A quest might, for example, ask you to listen to 10 songs of the three underdog genres—classical, country, and reggae—within the next 12 hours. In this way, your sense of competition exposes you to music you might otherwise not be interested in, and surprises may unfold; such as my realization, that classical music is actually amazing!

Assunta Alegiani

Music platforms can be confusing, but thesixtyone.com has found a way to not only organize the chaos, but also to play and interact with it. You can save songs to your playlist, subscribe to an artist, subscribe to other listeners whose tastes you like, and even purchase songs and albums as downloads.

Despite all the free music, the artists do not feel exploited. On the contrary, the sixtyone.com offers a chance to generate a close fan base, and even make some money in a more democratic way than is customarily the case with record labels. At the end of every month the complete profit goes to the artist.

On top of providing a small income for the musician, this sends a statement about music in general: it gives back its value. It shows that music, while accessible to anyone, is still a privilege to receive. Since it was laboured over, it deserves a fair price. The consumer pays the artist directly, and knows that the profit is not going into the pockets of some greedy record label executive.

My friends and I started obsessing over thesixtyone.com this summer. It is fun – and highly addictive – to compete against each other over who gets to a higher level first. It is easy to exchange the latest must-listen-to discovery, and on various accounts we fell in love with songs and artists together. The only thing better than music, is music that is shared, and thesixtyone.com has brought a little of both into our lives.

COC Takes Flight with Madame Butterfly

Victoria Wang

The Canadian Opera Company's 09/10 season opened with Giacomo Puccini's *Madama Butterfly*, a strong reminder of how a thoughtful and cohesive vision can inject originality and freshness into a well-known and predictable story.

Pinkerton, an American naval officer marries Japanese geisha Cio-Cio-San with no intention of a permanent union, while unaware of how much she is in love with him. When he leaves Japan, she faithfully waits three years for his return, with their son, only to realise he has come back with an American wife. Heartbroken, she gives up the child and commits suicide.

It's a classic, even cliché story of love, betrayal and death, infused with exoticism that could easily veer into over-sentimentality and caricature, which director Brian Macdonald deftly avoided with an overall understated aesthetic. Designer Susan Benson's set was beautifully framed by moving wooden screens and a simple, clean palette. With simple furniture pieces and a pointed lack of decoration, the minimalist and lean look captured the essence of the play by allowing the music to come forward to fill and transform the space.

Although Puccini made no use of Japanese instruments, the authenticity of the composer's tunes should be noted. Themes based on Japanese folk songs and traditional melodies accompany the relevant characters through a blend of harp, piccolo and flute to give undertones of an oriental sound. Still, there are moments when the centrality of inter-racial love seems too overt in the music, such as the Star Spangled Banner melody that introduces Pinkerton. As reflected in the show's visual interpretation, it is subtlety that marks the strongest sections of the opera. In one of the most beautiful and poignant scenes of Madonald's production, music and staging perfectly complement each other in a nuanced manner as Cio-Cio-San waits an entire night for Pinkerton. The women's humming chorus can be heard offstage, followed by a long orchestral intermezzo which accompanies the silent, moving image of Cio-Cio-San standing in the same position as dawn breaks. As the audience is made to wait with her, the power in this sequence is found in its stasis, and the agonising passage of time is deftly enhanced by Michael Whitfield's lighting.

No doubt that the weight of the opera is largely carried by its title protagonist, a demanding role requiring a *lirico spinto* soprano who must alternate between a lyrical and dramatic use of voice.

Adina Nitescu seemed to lack the former quality but shone in the second act when it came to emoting a desperate and tortured soul. Also memorable in the slower paced Act One was the chorus of Cio-Cio-San's family, who arrive to denounce her marriage. As they repeat her name in unison like a curse and move as a menacing ensemble, an ominous mob mentality crowds out the stage's tranquility, and it is this first disruption that casts a shadow over the rest of the narrative.

In their faithful and original approach to this opera, that Puccini considered his finest, the Canadian Opera Company have showcased their ability to adapt and innovate, qualities that opera fans will no doubt expect in the rest of their season.

For more details on upcoming productions, visit www.coc.ca

Review

White Lies at the Pheonix

Shauna C.
Keddy

Exuberant and attractive, with a concert-ready voice and strong band members to boot, Harry McVeigh led the British band *White Lies* in a vibrant show at The Phoenix Theater. Founding band members Charles Cave (drums), and Jack Lawrence-Brown (bass), held down the pop-rock sound of *Lies*, along with Tommy Bowen, (also on bass) who is only with them in performances.

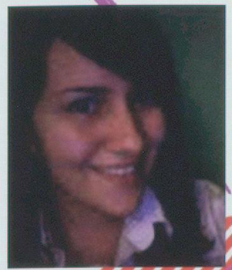
The Phoenix is a small venue, located in the neighborhood known as Cabbagetown, but since that doesn't mean much to most people, it is east of Church and Wellesley, by Allen Gardens. A silver phoenix against the balcony serves as the emblem for the venue, while beautiful murals cover the wall behind the bar area. The venue has been around since the sixties, and has two other rooms: one upstairs and parlor room complete with a pool table. There is even a large disco ball, with bits of mirror of different shapes and sizes, creating a mosaic affect.

Photograph by Jonathan Hutchinson

Unfortunately, the concert experienc was considerably less stellar than it could have been, thanks to what many great shows suffer from—many overly drunk idiots in the crowd who almost ruin it for everyone else. A group of men who essentially put themselves on everyone's radar early in the night by being obnoxious before the opening band even began, and of course only got worse as the night went on. A couple songs into the *Lies* set, they started an intense, "push people as hard as you can"style mosh pit, sending many people crowd surfing, ending up on stage. It was also strange how long it took the security guards to kick them off the stage. Honestly, to see someone last for about eight seconds on stage is pretty unprecedented. Although lead singer McVeigh seemed to encourage the crazy energy the mosh pit was creating, he also showed his professional skills as a performer and musician by keeping his cool when audience members had the time of their lives making it onstage without being immediately tackled by a security guard.

Each member wore all black attire, not to mention McVeigh had tennis shoes with the band's name on them. Additionally, their shirts were left considerably unbuttoned. It was clear the band was out to impress, but their demeanor was genuine and easy going. Thus, it seems all the attention they have been getting from their debut album hasn't been going to their heads. "To Lose My Life" is the band's only album under the name White Lies, since they recorded under the name Fear of Flying before. They were able to play all of the songs from their album in their show since they began quite early—the band took the stage at around seven thirty. The only other songs they played were "Taxidermy", a single they released soon after their album, and a cover of Portishead's "The Rip". For a band with just one release, their fans were hardcore, almost everyone knew the words to each song and the venue was packed.

BEST independent record stores in TORONTO



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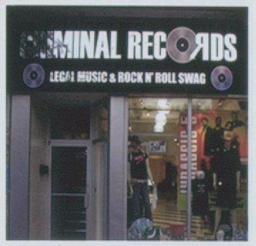
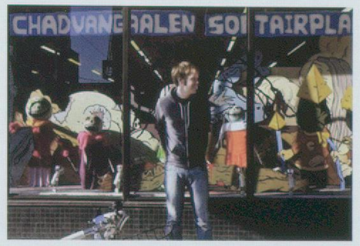




Soundscapes

Located in Little Italy, Soundscapes has become one of Toronto's most beloved independent record stores. Opened in August of 1999 by a former accountant who was bored with the mundane world of punching numbers, the now decade old retailer continues to provide music lovers with an impressive collection of music from a wide range of genres including folk, jazz, world, soul, hip hop, experimental, classical, and pop/rock. Soundscapes also sells a variety of music books and magazines. For those disenchanted by Ticket Masters' service charges, Soundscapes sells tickets to shows happening in the Toronto area. What distinguishes Soundscapes from other record stores is their commitment to support local independent artists. Soundscapes has a shelf dedicated to local musicians and frequently holds in store performances showcasing Canadian talent. Pervious in-store performances include up and coming and established artists such as Timber Timbre, Two Hours Traffic, Gentleman Reg, and Dog Day. For those interested in checking out a performance, I advise you that the store is small, so be sure to get their early. Soundscapes is a place where you can feel the love for music. The staff is incredibly friendly and love to chat with customers about music. In fact, they love taking customer suggestions. If you crave that personal connection between people and music, then Soundscapes is the best place to get your music.

Location: 572 College St., Toronto, ON
For more information:
www.soundscapesmusic.com

Criminal Records

Criminal Records is immersed in the Toronto music scene, located only a short walk away from music venues such as the legendary Horseshoe Tavern, the Rivoli, and the Cameron House. The store is comprised of a collection of 4000 CD titles and 3000 vinyl titles from alt-country to punk. Criminal Records also sells the best music swag in all of Toronto, with a wide assortment of t-shirts, sweaters, buttons, hats, stickers, and autographed concert posters. In addition, Criminal Records commits itself to supporting local acts by putting on in-store performances and by selling independent music. The most recent in store performances include Said the Whale, Dan Mangan, and Brian Borcherdt. The staff, including Wayne Petti (the vocalist and guitarist of Cuff the Duke), are great people who are passionate about all sorts of music and are always helpful, suggesting new music to customers. Criminal Records is best for those who love vinyl. It has a well-stocked collection of records and continues to order new vinyl on a regular basis. Simply name it and chances are you'll find what you're looking for at Criminal Records.

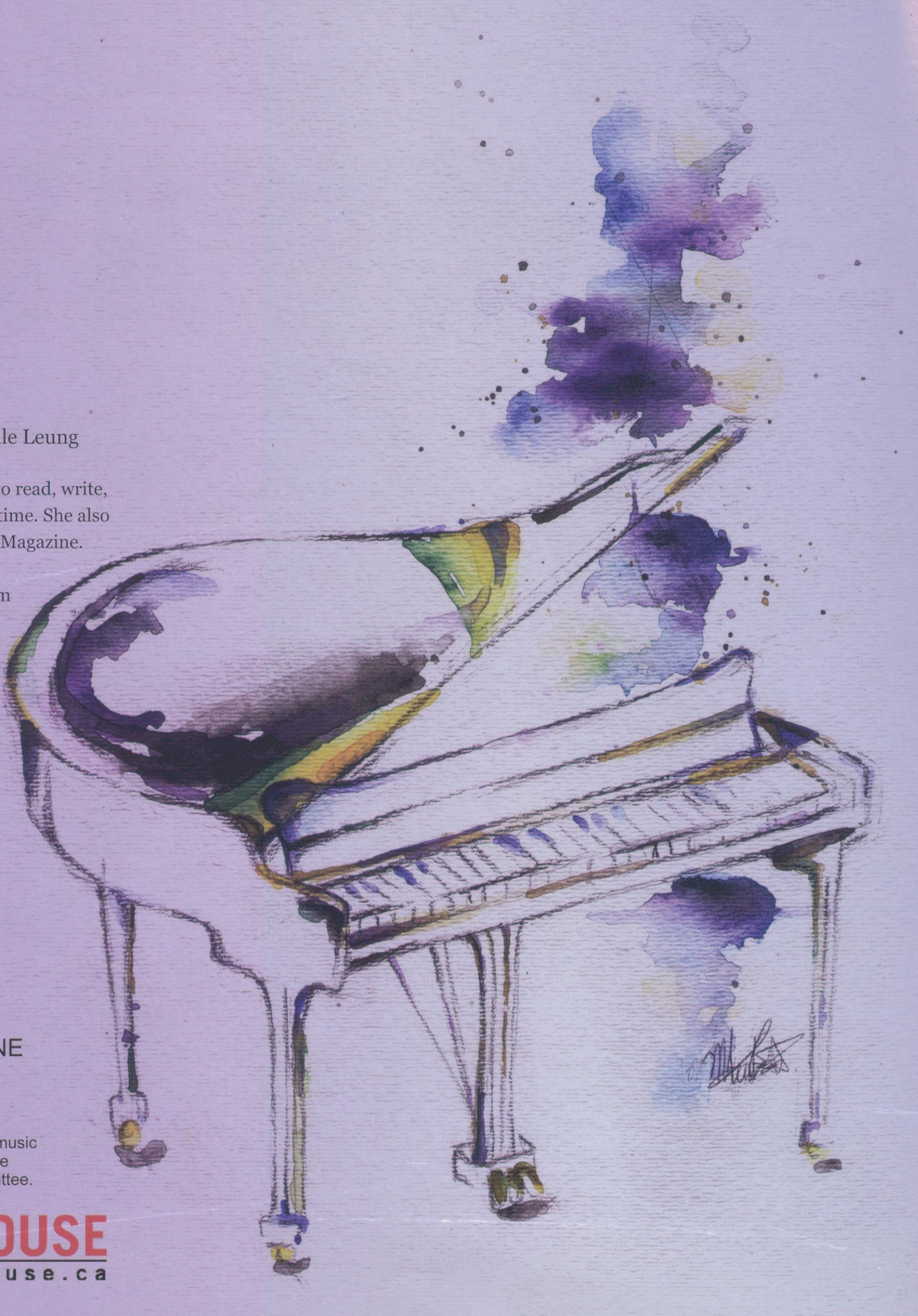
Location: 493 Queen Street West,
Toronto, ON
For more information:
www.crimedoesntpay.ca

Sonic Boom

A much larger store in comparison to Soundscapes and Criminal Records, Sonic Boom takes up significant territory on Bloor Street West. Open from 10am to midnight 365 days a year, Sonic Boom is committed to giving you your music when you want it. The store has one of the largest collections of music out of any independent record store, selling used music at discounted prices that are student-budget friendly. You can also sell Sonic Boom your used music goods. The basement of the store has a real stage for in-store performances, although the frequency of performances varies. You can check out pictures and videos of past performances on their website. Past performers include Sebastien Grainger and the Mountains and The Wooden Sky. Don't be intimated by the size of the store, but I warn you now that a visit to Sonic Boom is not one of those quick in and out browsing trips. It's easy to spend a few hours in the store and come out having purchased way more than you anticipated.

Location: 512 Bloor Street West,
Toronto, ON
For more information:
www.sonicboommusic.com

Review



Cover Artist: Maybelle Leung

Maybelle Leung loves to read, write, and draw in her spare time. She also illustrates for *WhatIf?* Magazine. Visit her website at www.maybellestyle.com

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